STORIES OF FAMOUS OPERAS

Little Girl.
A very merry Christmas.

STORIES

OF

FAMOUS OPERAS.

MARGUERITE.

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OF

FAMOUS OPERAS

BY

H. A. GUERBER

Author of

"MYTHS OF GREECE AND ROME," "STORIES OF THE WAGNER OPERA," "LEGENDS OF THE VIRGIN AND CHRIST," ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE kindly reception accorded to my little volume on the "Stories of the Wagner Opera" has made me hope that a similar work, briefly outlining the plots of the principal French, German, and Italian operas most frequently given at the present day, might prove equally acceptable to the general reader.

In the narrow limits of one small volume, only a selection can be given. So, all the operas based upon any of Shakespeare's well-known plays have not been included, and only one version of the Faust Legend admitted. The narratives have been written from the original librettos to enable the spectator to follow every phase of the action on the stage. Of course, the main charm of an opera lies in the music, for the librettos have often been adapted to its requirements to the detriment of the story.

It is hoped that these sketches will either enable the reader to recall beautiful scenes once beheld upon the stage, and to hear again in memory the beautiful melodies with which they are connected, or give non-opera-goers a faint idea of performances which have given pleasure to thousands, and which, we trust, may long continue to charm all true music-lovers.

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STORIES

OF

FAMOUS OPERAS.

FAUST.

GOETHE'S famous poem supplied the theme for Gounod's master-piece, — an opera which in different countries bears the name of "Faust," "Faust and Marguerite," or "Marguerite" only. The libretto is the work of two Frenchmen, Barbier and Carré; and the opera was first given in Paris, at the Théâtre Lyrique, in 1859.

Gounod had already written four operas, none of which had been very successful, when he produced "Faust," which placed him "at once in the first rank of living composers." This work is still a great favourite, and it never fails to draw crowds of enthusiastic listeners, for "Gounod is a great musician and a thorough master of the orchestra." His two greatest productions, "Faust" and "Romeo and Juliet"

(which latter was produced eight years later), now bid fair to prove immortal.

"Romeo and Juliet" follows the text of Shakespeare's well-known play so closely that its story need not be retold here; but the theme of "Faust" is less familiar, and is hence related at length.

Seated in his library, in front of a table covered with huge folios and musty parchments, the aged Dr. Faust wearily pursues the abstruse studies begun so many years ago. But, although he has spent all his life in research, his quest has been vain, for he has not been able to solve the mysteries of life and death, and all other knowledge appears worthless to him.

The light of his lamp flickers and dies out as he closes his book with a sigh of discouragement. He opens his window, only to perceive that another day is dawning. Rather than face its weary round he determines to commit suicide, for death seems to have forgotten him. Seizing a vial of poison on the table, he pours its contents into a cup, which he is on the point of carrying to his lips when he is checked by a merry song.

He turns hastily toward the window, and there hears the voices of passing maidens, singing an air as fresh, pure, and sparkling as the

radiant morn, in which they extol the beauties of nature and the raptures of awakening love. But their joyous tones only serve to embitter the morose student, who, as they pass on, again raises the fatal goblet to his lips, wondering why his hand should tremble at the approach of death, for which he longs.

A second chorus, however, now strikes his ear. It is sung by the hardy labourers, on their way to the fields. They render hearty thanks for their vigorous frames, and for the prospect of a fine day. Their virile tones bitterly remind Dr. Faust of the time when he, too, delighted in activity, believed in God, and when each new day brought him new joys.

He sighs at the thought that those days are over, curses the hours he has wasted in vain study, and, feeling that love, youth, and faith have left him for ever, reviles God and calls aloud for Satan. As he is a magician, to whom all forms of incantation are familiar, the demon promptly appears at his call, dressed all in red and with the jaunty bearing of a gay cavalier.

Mephistopheles, for such is the name Satan bears, politely tenders his services to the terrified Faust, whose summons he has so promptly obeyed ; he offers him wealth, glory, and power, all of which are scornfully refused. Finding it

impossible to get rid of the demon he has conjured, and urged to express his most secret wishes, Faust finally confesses, in a passionate song, that he longs to be young once more, to feel the blood coursing madly through his veins, and to taste the pleasures of life in its prime.

This request Mephistopheles promises to grant, on condition that Faust will sign a contract, binding himself to serve the devil hereafter as faithfully as the latter serves him while on earth. But Faust hesitates to sign the document which the fiend places before him, so Mephistopheles bids him look up and behold what awaits him if he complies.

Then, while lovely music falls upon his ear, one of his library walls vanishes, and Faust beholds a beautiful, golden-haired peasant girl, seated before her spinning-wheel. He remains spellbound at the vision, until Mephistopheles tells him that the maiden shall be his, if he will only sign the proffered pact. Thus encouraged, Faust wavers no longer, signs the document, and when the devil presents the cup of poison, telling him it will restore his vanished youth, he pledges the beautiful vision, and eagerly drains it to the dregs.

New life now flows through every vein, and the aged Faust finds himself transformed into a

gallant young man, just as the vision fades away and disappears. He longs to see the girl once more; and when Mephistopheles tells him that he shall meet her this very day, he drags the demon away with him, both singing of youth, love, and pleasure, as they leave the scene.

The next act opens with the Kermess scene, of which the music is particularly attractive. In front of the Inn of Bacchus, near the city gates, a throng of people have assembled for the yearly fair. Some students are lustily calling for wine and beer. Their leader, Wagner, proposes a toast, which they gladly drink. But while they seem absorbed by their potations, the soldiers eye the passing girls, and boast of their prowess in capturing both citadels and hearts. The sober citizens, in the mean while, care neither for revelry nor conquests, but extol the pleasures of watching the crowd pass to and fro, while they listen to stories of olden times and take their ease. They are so staid and sober that the girls pay but little heed to them, and only coquet with the students and soldiers, among whom they hope to recruit partners for the coming dance. They are so successful in attracting the attention of these gallants that they call down upon their heads reproofs from the older women, who are jealous

because their somewhat riper charms are so completely eclipsed.

The groups soon break up, remarks are exchanged, healths are drunk, and the majority of the people, having found partners, wander off the stage.

Only a few students still sit before the inn drinking, when Valentino slowly comes upon the scene. He holds a little silver medal, which his sister Marguerite has just given him, and hangs it carefully around his neck to preserve him from all harm. Wagner calls to him to come and join them, and soon all are drinking together. Valentino's depression is so evident, however, that the students rally him upon it, until he tells them that he dreads leaving Marguerite alone and unprotected. His friends all promise to watch over the lovely maiden; and Siebel, a youth who has long loved her, vows he will guard her with tender care.

Valentino, although grateful to his friends for their kindness, says that he commits his sister to Providence, whose protection he now beseeches. Even were he to fall in battle, he declares that his last thought and prayer would be for Marguerite. To cheer his anxious comrade, Wagner now proposes another drink, and, encouraged by his companions, begins a merry

and nonsensical ditty. While he is singing, Mephistopheles draws near, begs permission to join the students, and when called upon to entertain the company in his turn, sings of the power and attractions of glittering gold, of the god Mammon and his prime minister Beelzebub. His song has such a strange metallic sound that it rouses the surprise of the drinkers; still, as soon as it is ended, Valentino cordially offers him some wine. Mephistopheles accepts the glass, detaining and examining the hand of Valentino, and saying the young man is doomed to die by the hand of one of his friends. Siebel, who longs to have his fortune told too, now thrusts his palm forward. After oracularly telling him that every flower he tries to touch will wither, Mephistopheles slyly adds that he can therefore cull no more bouquets for Marguerite.

On hearing his sister's name from the stranger's lips, Valentino starts; but Mephistopheles pays no heed to him, and proposing a toast begins to drink. As the wine in his cup is not to his taste, he throws it away, and, springing upon the table, taps the barrel which serves as sign to the inn. Then addressing the rude wooden image of Bacchus, he calls for a beverage more to his taste. The wine gushes forth at his call, and Mephistopheles, having filled

his own glass, invites his companions to come and be helped in their turn, and drink to the health of Marguerite. His insolent manner is resented by Valentino, who strikes the goblet out of his hand, dashing the liquid to the ground, where all can see that it is a fiery, supernatural fluid.

The irate brother having drawn his sword to punish Mephistopheles, the latter makes a circle with the point of his weapon, which Valentino and his companions are powerless to cross. Valentino's sword soon breaks short in his grasp, and seeing earthly weapons will not prevail against the fiend, all now present their cross-shaped hilts, before which Mephistopheles cowers abjectly until they depart.

The fiend has barely resumed his wonted insolent carriage when Faust comes up, moodily threatening to leave him if he does not make good his promise and produce Marguerite. Mephistopheles says the girl's purity makes the undertaking particularly difficult, but he predicts that the merry sounds they now hear will hasten her coming. Just then, the chorus returns, keeping time to the waltz played by the band, and singing of the rhythmic charms of the dance, which sways them as the wind sways the wheat.

As soon as all are busy dancing, Mephistopheles urges Faust to join in their amusements; but the latter has no desire for any one but Marguerite, whom Siebel, too, is seeking everywhere in vain. Suddenly the young student sees her approach, on her way home from church; but when he would fain accost her, he is intercepted by Mephistopheles, who, taking advantage of the terror inspired by the mere power of his sardonic glance, forces him to retreat.

In the mean time, Faust has seized the auspicious moment, and drawing near Marguerite courteously offers her his arm. But she modestly refuses an honour unbecoming to her lowly station in life, and passes on. Faust gazes after her spellbound, while the dancers comment upon Marguerite's repulse of so gallant a cavalier. But when Mephistopheles drags Faust away, along the road taken by Marguerite, the revellers thoughtlessly resume their merry dance.

The third act is played in an enclosed garden, near Marguerite's cottage. The door opens, and the gentle Siebel steals in, and, singing of his love for Marguerite, begins gathering flowers to make a bouquet for her. But, to his horror, they wither at his touch. Then only

he remembers the stranger's prediction, and, rushing to the little shrine where Marguerite is wont to say her prayers, he piously bathes his hand in holy water. To his delight he now finds the evil spell is broken; and having made his bouquet and placed it where Marguerite will be sure to find it, he leaves the garden, vowing he will declare his love to her on the morrow.

During his quest for flowers, the garden-door has opened again to give passage to Faust and Mephistopheles, who, hiding in the shrubbery, overhear Siebel's resolution. As soon as the youth has gone, Mephistopheles tells Faust he must depart in quest of a present to eclipse Siebel's flowers, and goes away. Left alone, Faust gazes with all a lover's adoration at the house which shelters the object of his passion, and sings a beautiful aria about it. He has just finished when Mephistopheles returns with a jewel casket, which he places beside Siebel's flowers; and although Faust, now under the influence of better feelings, would fain depart and leave the maid in peace, the fiend forces him to hide in the garden.

They have barely reached their place of concealment when Marguerite comes out into the yard with her wheel. While spinning, she sings Goethe's song of the "King of Thule,"

MARGUERITE IN THE GARDEN.

interrupting herself to make occasional comments upon the handsome youth who offered her his arm on her way home from church. She feels so restless that she soon goes toward the shrine to pray for Valentino. There her attention is first attracted to Siebel's flowers, but they are soon cast aside in her eagerness to examine the contents of the casket.

The village maiden is dazzled by the jewels it contains; and finding a little mirror, she adorns herself, gazing with innocent coquetry at her own radiant image, and thinking the stranger might well have taken her for a lady had he only seen her thus bedecked. The "jewel song" is just ended when Martha, the aged servant whom Valentino has hired to chaperone her, comes into the garden; she starts at the sight of the jewels, and assures Marguerite that they are doubtless the offering of some gallant, who is evidently far more generous than her spouse ever was.

Their conversation is interrupted by Mephistopheles, who, under pretext of announcing the death of her husband, engrosses all Martha's attention, advising Faust, in a hasty aside, to make use of the opportunity to address Marguerite. Startled by his presence there, the young girl hastily strips off the jewels, in spite

of his protests, and then, disarmed by his gentle deference, accepts his arm, and begins walking up and down the garden with him.

Martha, in the mean time, has taken Mephistopheles' arm, and, without giving another thought to her dead husband, is lending a delighted ear to the flattery of the arch-fiend, whom she fancies has fallen victim to her elderly charms. Her charge is entirely forgotten, and the two couples wander around the garden, appearing on the stage in turn. When Faust and Marguerite have walked about some time, they are such good friends that the maiden artlessly tells her escort of her loneliness, now that her brother is away and her mother and idolised baby sister are both dead.

Every word she says only serves to make Faust more deeply enamoured with her; and when Martha and Mephistopheles reappear, the quartette are so absorbed in their love-affairs that Marguerite is the first to notice the approach of night and to beg Faust to leave. Embracing her passionately, he startles her so by a confession of his love that she breaks loose from him and takes refuge in the house. Her sudden flight attracts the attention of Martha; and while the old woman gazes in wonder after her charge, Mephistopheles hastily hides behind a tree.

Martha is somewhat astonished, on turning around, to find that her gallant has gone; but, seeing there is nothing to be gained by remaining here alone, she goes away, to the great relief of Mephistopheles. He ruefully comments upon the taste of a woman who would fain marry Satan, and casts a baleful spell over the flowers in the garden before he goes away.

Shortly after, by the soft light of a radiant moon, the youthful lovers walk up and down; for Faust has pursued Marguerite, made his peace with her, and induced her to come out into the garden with him to bid him good-night. Needless to state, the farewells are prolonged and repeated. As they pass a flower bed, Marguerite plucks a flower and furtively pulls off its petals one by one to ascertain whether Faust really loves her. He soon discovers her purpose, and when she stops at "he loves me not," protests his devotion so vehemently that she is terrified. Kneeling before him, she implores him to go away and leave her. This prayer he cannot resist, and, touched by her purity, he lets her go, and is overjoyed when she throws him a last kiss as she vanishes into the house.

Marguerite is no sooner gone, however, than Mephistopheles appears, railing at Faust for

his weakness. When the young man makes a move to leave the garden, he detains him directly under Marguerite's window, bidding him pause there a moment. The casement soon opens, and the innocent girl, deeming herself alone, confides to the moon her new secret, and ardently longs for the morrow, so she can again behold the object of her love.

Her expressed longing for his presence enraptures Faust, who, with an upward spring, clasps her hand. As her head sinks upon his breast, Mephistopheles, knowing the baneful spell he has laid upon the flowers will now act without his presence, leaves the garden, laughing fiendishly.

The fourth act is played in the street, in front of Marguerite's house. Thinking herself alone, Marguerite, who is now much older, steals sadly out of her dwelling, but only to be a subject of mockery on the part of some heartless girls, who taunt her because her fine lover has deserted her. When they have gone, the shrinking Marguerite comments upon their unfeeling remarks, and wonders why she should be so severely punished when love was her only crime.

She is weeping sorely when Siebel comes upon the scene. He addresses her compas-

sionately, telling her he shares her sorrows, as he once shared her joys, and bitterly denouncing her seducer. But Marguerite bids him do no harm to the man she still loves in spite of all his perfidy, and, gently thanking him, she goes on to the church to pray for her lover and child.

Siebel watches her out of sight and then goes away. Presently the echoes of the quiet street are awakened by the martial strains of the soldiers, who come home in triumph, singing of the glory they have won, boasting of their exploits for their fatherland, and anticipating the joys of their return.

As they pass on, Valentino appears, and meeting Siebel eagerly asks news of sister and home. The young man's answers are so embarrassed that Valentino, after vainly trying to wring the truth from him, vanishes into the house, while Siebel still wildly implores him to forgive his sister.

Siebel goes to the church to meet Marguerite and bring her home. Night comes on, and Faust and Mephistopheles stroll down the street. The fiend is in a bad temper because all his spells have not been able to make Faust forget Marguerite, or to banish the remorse which has haunted him night and day ever since he betrayed the innocent girl.

As Faust says he is determined to see Marguerite once more, Mephistopheles seizes a guitar, and tries to attract her attention by a mock serenade, which is interrupted from time to time by his bursts of derisive laughter. Suddenly the door opens, and Valentino rushes angrily out, demanding what they want, and drawing his sword to kill his sister's seducer. Conscious of guilt, Faust accepts the challenge only when compelled to do so. But when Valentino scornfully throws away the medal his sister gave him, after a last prayer for vengeance, Mephistopheles mutters that the issue of the battle can no longer be doubtful.

Helped by the fiend, who parries every blow which might reach him, Faust deals Valentino a mortal wound, and is dragged away from the scene of the duel just as the citizens come rushing out of their houses. The sounds of strife have attracted them; and when they discover the wounded Valentino, they offer to carry him into the house. He bids them desist, as his moments are numbered, and, weak as he is with loss of blood, bitterly denounces Marguerite, who appears just then, supported by Siebel. She falls on her knees beside him, imploring his forgiveness; but he solemnly curses her, and tells her that although Heaven may

pardon, he cannot. His words appall the people, who, when he has breathed his last, bear him away. Then Siebel gently raises poor Marguerite, whose reason has almost left her at the sound of her brother's curse.

Her only hope is now in Heaven, so in the next scene we behold her kneeling in church, near one of the holy water vessels. But even here the relentless fiend pursues her, and, not content with ruining her bodily, now seeks to destroy her soul with the help of his demon crew. She will not, however, listen to their voices, but prays on, until one of the tombs beside her opens. Mephistopheles appears, and leaning over its edge, begins to whisper to her of past joys and lost innocence. He assures her that God has forsaken her, and insists that she is about to fall a prey to the demons whose voices are calling her.

While he is speaking thus, the hymn of the choir is heard now and again; but although Marguerite frantically tries to follow the holy words, the fiend will not allow her to do so, and torments her until she rushes out of church a raving maniac.

The last act shows a damp and squalid prison, where a sadly altered Marguerite is lying fast asleep on a pallet of straw. In a fit of madness

she has strangled her own child, and for this crime she has been imprisoned and sentenced to a shameful death. It is night, and the jailer is sleeping as Faust and Mephistopheles reach the door. They have come thither from the witches' revels on the Brocken, for even there Faust was haunted by visions of the unhappy Marguerite. Threatening to break his pact with Satan if he does not serve him, he has forced the fiend to come thither to rescue Marguerite. Mephistopheles gives Faust the keys he has secured, urging him to make haste, and promising to mount guard while he enters Marguerite's cell. Stepping into the prison, Faust bends remorsefully over the poor girl, who, awakening joyfully at his call, implores him to save her from the demons which have tortured her incessantly. Suddenly she fancies she is once more the innocent, light-hearted girl who refused a gallant's arm on her way home from church, but later sauntered in the moonlit garden by his side.

Faust is broken-hearted at these evident signs of a shattered reason; but Mephistopheles admonishes him to lose no time if he would save her, and he tries to draw her away with him. At the sight of the demon lurking in the shadow, Marguerite recoils, and falling upon her knees fervently prays to God, in whom

alone she puts her trust. She implores him to save her from further evil, and to send down his angels to receive her soul, and bear it up to the heavenly mansions where her spirit will find rest.

As she sinks lifeless to the ground, the prison walls open, refulgent light replaces the gloom, and Marguerite's ransomed soul is borne upward by an angelic host, who sing of the rapture in heaven over a soul redeemed from all earthly sin by the risen Lord.

At this sight, the repentant and now believing Faust falls upon his knees; while the baffled fiend, who has only succeeded in ruining Marguerite's body, sinks down into Hades with a hoarse cry of rage.

CARMEN.

THE composer of this well-known opera is George Bizet, a Frenchman, who, after winning the Prix de Rome at the Conservatoire in Paris, married the daughter of his teacher Halévy. After producing several rather insignificant works, Bizet wrote the fine score for "Carmen," which was produced in 1875, with great success. The composer, however, did not live long enough to realise how strong a hold "Carmen" would take upon music-lovers, but died suddenly, a few months after it had appeared.

The libretto for "Carmen" is founded on Prosper Mérimée's romance of the same name, the words being written by Halévy and Meilhac. The story is very sombre, but the fine setting is very attractive, and never fails to draw large audiences wherever it is played.

The first act of this opera opens on a public square in Seville, early in this century. A wide gate leads out of the city, and through its open portals one can see a bridge, watched by dra-

CALVÉ AS CARMEN.

goons. The guard-house is very near this gate, directly opposite the cigar factory. As the curtain rises, a group of idle soldiers stand there smoking, and commenting in chorus upon the people who hurry to and fro across the square.

While they sing, the peasant girl Michaela comes timidly upon the scene. She wears a blue petticoat, and her light hair falls in two heavy braids over her shoulders. She seems to be hesitating whether to advance or recede, and gazes so fixedly at the soldiers that she attracts the attention of the brigadier Moralès, who points her out to his companions. Then, concluding she is pretty enough to be encouraged, Moralès steps forward, and addressing her inquires what she is seeking. She timidly answers, "A brigadier;" but when Moralès offers his services, she explains that she is in quest of brigadier José. None of the soldiers know him, so Moralés invites her to wait there until the relieving guard appear, as she may find him among them.

The timid Michaela says she will come back later, and goes away in spite of the soldiers' efforts to detain her. Deprived of this momentary amusement, the dragoons again watch the stir on the square, until they hear the sound of

the military march which announces the arrival of the relieving corps. An officer steps out of the guard-house, the soldiers take up their lances, with their gay red and yellow guidons, and fall into rank, while all the people crowd around to watch the change of sentinels.

Trumpeters and fife-players now come over the bridge, closely followed by a posse of street boys, who sing of the time when they too will be soldiers and keep step with the music. Next come the officer Zuniga and the brigadier José, followed by a number of dragoons armed with their lances.

The command being transferred to the new guard, the officers converse together while the sentinels are changed. Then Moralès tells José that a pretty girl has been asking for him. José recognises her by the description, and watches the old guard leave in the same order as they came. After mustering and inspecting his troop, the new officer of the guard bids them break ranks ; and the dragoons, having placed their lances in the rack, pass into the guard-house. José is left alone outside with the commanding officer, who stares at the opposite building and asks if that is the cigar factory, and whether there are any pretty girls among the employees.

José answers so indifferently that the officer

rallies him, and wins from him a quiet admission that he is soon to marry the blond Michaela. The captain's attention is now distracted by the loud peal of the factory bell. The soldiers come out of the guard-house, and the people of Seville collect on the square to see the cigar-makers and exchange remarks with them. Singing a gay little song, and lightly puffing the smoke from their cigarettes, the factory girls now troop out of the building. The soldiers eagerly scan their ranks, in search of the arch coquette Carmen, or Carmencita, who soon appears, wearing a bouquet of bright flowers in her bodice. She carelessly makes her way through the various groups of young men, coquetting with all alike, but distinguishing none, although all clamour for her favour and ask whether she has never been in love. Carmen answers this question by singing a gay little song, in which she says that Love is a mysterious and rebellious cherub, who mischievously baffles those who would fain catch him. But although the young men declare they are pining for her, and bid her choose among them, she indifferently passes them all by. Suddenly the factory bell rings, and her companions having left her, she flings her bouquet straight at José, — the only man who has paid no attention to her.

He is absorbed in the manufacture of a chain for his sword, and jumping up gazes in amazement at the vanishing coquette. When all have gone he picks up Carmen's flowers, comments upon her strange glance, and inhales the subtle perfume of the blossoms, which he fancies must be bewitched.

While he stands there alone, Michaela comes running toward him. Talking to her, he learns that she is an emissary from his mother, who sends him money, a letter, loving messages, and a kiss, which the girl innocently delivers in person. Overcome by tender memories of the past, the dragoon sings of his mother and happy childhood, and says that the kiss he has just received will protect him from the wiles of a wicked person. Of course Michaela does not understand this allusion, or the resentful glance which he casts at the factory. After receiving messages for his mother, and a kiss which she promises to deliver, she bids him farewell. When she has vanished, José reads his mother's letter, wherein she enjoins him to marry Michaela. He solemnly determines to do so, and never think again of Carmen, whose flowers he wishes to throw away. But a sudden uproar in the factory startles him, and, as the officer steps out of the guard-house, the cigarette-makers

come thronging on the stage, calling for the police. From their confused and contradictory statements, the dragoon gathers that an affray of some kind has taken place between Carmencita and Manuelita, so he sends José into the factory to investigate the matter.

While the excited cigar-makers are still discussing the event, José reappears, leading Carmen. He reports that a woman is lying in the factory, sorely wounded, and that the assailant is evidently Carmen. The officer now tries to question the latter, but she will neither admit nor deny her guilt, and insolently sings that they may chop her in pieces or burn her to a crisp without getting any information from her. Incensed by her manner, the officer orders her hands to be bound behind her back, and declares she shall go to prison to finish her song.

The spectators having all gone about their business, José is left alone to mount guard over the prisoner. Carmen tries her fascinations upon him, and wrings from him a reluctant admission that he has been detailed to convey her to prison. Then she coquettishly informs him that she cast a spell over him when she flung her flowers at him, and that although he may struggle he is doomed to love her, a statement which the young dragoon secretly feels must be true.

She archly tells him that Lillas Pastia keeps an inn near the ramparts of Seville, where there is such good music that it would be a charming place to dance with a brigadier who has caught her fancy. Reinforced by coquettish glances, this song has the desired effect; and the infatuated brigadier not only loosens the cord which binds her hands, but promises to let her escape on the way to prison. The officer coming out with the necessary order, Carmen marches off between José and two dragoons, still singing of the wiles of love. Near the bridge she suddenly pushes José, who, as she directed, pretends to lose his balance, and falls down. She promptly effects her escape over the bridge, flinging the rope over the parapet, while her companions, the factory girls, loudly applaud her and deride the fallen brigadier.

The second act opens in the tavern of Lillas Pastia, where dinner is just over, and where Carmen and two of her gypsy companions are still sitting at table with Moralès. He is the last victim of Carmen's coquetry, but she pays little heed to him now, and seems busy watching the gypsies dance. She soon joins her companions in singing a merry song, and finally takes part in the dance until she is quite exhausted and out of breath. Although he is told it is time to

close the inn, Moralès lingers there awhile longer, vainly trying to please Carmen, who gives him none but short and indifferent answers. Exasperated by her manner, he accuses her of being in love with the brigadier, who, by allowing her to escape, lost his rank and was sent to prison for two months.

She pretends that she does not care about this brigadier, and Moralès is about to go away, when a noisy party is heard approaching the inn. The officer, looking out of the window, watches the approach of Escamillo, the Toreador, whom all are applauding for his bravery. They soon come into the inn, where Escamillo sings a picturesque song, in which he describes the delights and dangers of a Spanish bull-fight.

Carmen, fascinated by the new-comer, gazes at him coquettishly, and waits upon him most attentively. Having duly refreshed themselves, the chorus prepare to depart, and file out of the inn. But Escamillo tarries in the doorway, whispering compliments to Carmen, who seems flattered by his attentions. Then he goes out with Moralès, who promises to call upon her again. The door closes, and the three gypsy girls, left alone in the inn, listen to the Toreador chorus until it dies away in the distance.

As soon as the innkeeper has closed all the shutters, two smugglers, Dancairo and Il Remendado, come upon the scene, complaining of ill-luck, and telling the girls they must come with them and lend a hand, for women are ever clever at deceiving. The two girls promise their help, but Carmen, their chief ally, refuses to go with them. When pressed to give a reason for her obstinate refusal, she says it is because she has fallen in love. They now learn that she has been touched by the devotion of José, who has just been released from prison, and is even now coming up to the inn to join her. This news is confirmed by the sound of his voice in the distance, singing a gay military song. The smugglers, having gazed at him through the chinks of the shutters, and fancying he would be a likely recruit for their ranks, leave the room, after winning a promise from Carmen to do her best to beguile him into joining them. They have scarcely gone when José flings open the door and joyfully greets Carmen. She softly pities him for spending two months in a gloomy prison, although he gallantly protests he would do much more for her sake.

Still he shows signs of jealousy when he hears that the officers have come up here to see the

gypsy girls dance, and, to disarm his anger, Carmen makes him sit down in a corner while she treads some measures for his special delectation. He is so absorbed watching her graceful motions that the recall, heard in the distance, only faintly reaches him, and it is only when it is repeated that he interrupts her dance, regretfully telling her he must go.

She reproaches him for being so ungrateful as to leave her thus abruptly after she has exhausted herself to please him, and between coaxing and simulated anger works him up to such a pitch that he forgets that the trumpet has sounded. To convince her of his devotion he shows her the flowers she gave him, and tells her how they comforted him in prison, where he thought of her alone.

Still obdurate, Carmen assures him that if he loved her, he would gladly go with her up into the mountains, where they would be free as air, where no parting would await them, and where blue sky would be the sole canopy over their heads. José resists her pleading as long as he can, telling her that honour and duty alike prevent his yielding, but she pretends to be very angry and goes to the door as if to leave him. Just then it is burst open by the jealous Moralès, who has come back to spy upon Carmen, and

who now tells her she shows very poor taste in preferring a subordinate to an officer. Turning to José, he orders him to leave, but the brigadier refuses and even draws his sword, offering to take the officer's life. Before he can proceed any further in his jealous fury, the smugglers rush in, attracted by Carmen's screams for help.

They seize Moralès, who now discovers that Carmen has lured him thither only to deliver him up into the hands of the smugglers. The latter lead him away, telling him they mean to detain him a prisoner until they have finished their present operations.

Left alone with José, Carmen resumes her pleading, knowing he cannot return to the army after threatening his superior. He consents to cast his lot with the smugglers, who promise him a free and merry life in the mountains.

The third act is played in a rocky and picturesque site in the mountains. Night has fallen over the scene, where the smugglers scramble down over the rocks, carrying great bales of goods. They are merrily boasting of the fortunes they will make if they succeed in the rest of their undertaking. The chiefs go away, bidding them rest awhile from their labours. The men wrap their cloaks around them and fling themselves down on the ground to sleep, while

Carmen draws near José. He is on guard, and in answer to her question, he tells her that he is looking down into the peaceful valley, where an old woman is praying for an absent son whom she believes to be a good man.

Carmen, who has grown weary of José, bitterly advises him to leave a life so little suited to his tastes. But he says he cannot go, and adds that if she again shows her indifference so plainly, he will kill her. She carelessly remarks that death is the award of fate, and joins the two other gypsy girls by the fire. They tell their fortunes by cards, and while two of them discover that a happy future awaits them, Carmen learns that death is her fate.

The smugglers return ; and after some conversation with the girls, it is arranged that the latter are to go and distract the attention of the coast guards, so that the smugglers can pass unseen with their contraband goods.

When all have left, and José is alone in camp, examining the priming of his gun, a guide appears above the rocks. He points out the way to Michaela, who soon comes upon the scene, looking timidly around her for José. His mother is dying, and she has come here to save him from the wiles of the gypsy maiden, who has made him prove false to honour and duty.

Before she can attract José's attention, a gun is fired. She hides in terror, just as Escamillo enters, gazing ruefully at the hole which the bullet has pierced in his hat. José, stepping forward, now inquires what he wishes; and Escamillo, little suspecting he is talking to Carmen's lover, relates that he has fallen in love with a gypsy maiden. He has come here to seek her, for he has heard that she is heartily tired of the young soldier who rashly forsook all for her sake.

It is only when José answers that he may have to pay dearly for the privilege of addressing Carmen, that the Toreador discovers his mistake. The two angry men have just begun fighting, when Carmen rushes upon the scene and separates them.

Escamillo now gallantly thanks Carmen for saving his life, and tells José he will be ready to meet him at any time. Then, after inviting Carmen and all the others to the coming bull-fight in Seville, he allows the smugglers to lead him out of camp, while Carmen detains the furious José.

As soon as Escamillo has gone, José warns Carmen to beware, as he is wellnigh desperate. She and the smugglers are about to depart, when they suddenly discover Michaela. Dragged out

of her place of concealment, the girl gives her message to José. But, although Carmen urges him to go to his mother, he refuses, for he fancies Carmen wishes to get rid of him so she can see the Toreador. Hearing that his mother is dying, however, he no longer resists, and goes away, although he shudders when he hears the voice of the Toreador in the distance.

The fourth act is played on the square at Seville, at the entrance of the circus. Many fruit and flower venders are on the scene. The officers soon appear, with the two gypsy maidens, whom they are taking to the bull-fight. The peddlers noisily offer their wares, and the officers buy fruit and fans, while the rapidly gathering crowd dance to the accompaniment of tambourines and castagnettes. The fandango ceases only when the band comes upon the scene, leading the way for the Alguazil and Toreadors, who are received with marked approval. Last of all comes Escamillo, the hero of the day, escorting Carmen, who is magnificently dressed. He reluctantly parts from her, telling her that she will soon have cause to be proud of him, while she assures him of her complete devotion. When the Alcalde and suite having passed into the great arena, the two gypsy girls draw near Carmen, advising her not to linger in such a

public spot, as she may meet her deserted lover José. But Carmen, tossing her head, declares she has no fear of him. As soon as they have left her, José appears, but she scorns all his attempts to placate her, and vows that all is over between them for ever.

Consumed by jealousy, José implores her not to speak so, if she has any regard for her own safety. But she answers that it is impossible for her ever to love him again, and finally refuses to pay any attention to his pleading. The jubilant notes of the trumpet now proclaim some victory on the part of the Toreador, whom the chorus within the circus loudly praise.

The enthusiastic plaudits of the crowd are heard with far different emotions by José and Carmen. Anxious to witness Escamillo's triumph, Carmen tries to go into the circus, but José blocks her way, still begging for compassion. His interference with her wishes finally makes her so angry, that she flings his ring at his feet, passionately telling him she loves the man whom the crowd is applauding so frantically.

Crazed by jealousy, and determined she shall not belong to Escamillo, José rushes forward, and stabs her to the heart as the Toreador chorus sounds once more and the crowd comes pouring out of the circus.

José loudly denounces himself as Carmen's murderer; and when the radiant Escamillo appears upon the steps of the circus, surrounded by his admiring friends, the unhappy dragoon flings himself across Carmen's dead body, with a hoarse cry of mingled love and despair.

AÏDA.

IT is almost universally conceded that Verdi is the most popular opera composer of the second half of the nineteenth century. Of his twenty-eight operas, several have never been given outside of Italy, his native country; but seven of them have been played in all parts of the world, and fully deserve the popularity they have enjoyed. These are "Ernani" and "Rigoletto," both based on Victor Hugo's plays, "Il Trovatore," "La Traviata," "Vespri Siciliani," "Un Ballo in Maschera," and his last and most brilliant work, "Aïda."

Verdi wrote the score for "Aïda" at the request of the Khedive, who wanted a new opera for the opening of his theatre in Cairo. As the subject was to be purely local, the first sketch for the libretto was furnished by the great Egyptologist, Mariette Bey, and was worked up into proper shape by Verdi, M. du Locle, and Ghislanzoni. The composer dreaded a sea journey, so the opera was produced without him; and although costumes and scenery were

NORDICA AS AÏDA.

detained till the last moment in besieged Paris, the final rehearsal was such a success that the Khedive was delighted. Curiosity reached such a pitch that all the seats were secured long in advance of the performance; and when "Aïda" was given for the first time, before a distinguished audience, it scored an immediate and complete success.

The opera begins in the great hall of the royal palace at Memphis, through the open doors of which one obtains a fine view of temples and pyramids in the background. Two actors are alone upon the scene, the high priest of Isis, Ramphis, in full pontifical array, and Rhadamès, the handsome young captain of the king's guard.

The high priest, addressing Rhadamès, informs him that the Ethiopians have again revolted, and are now threatening the Nile Valley and the city of Thebes. He has just consulted the goddess, and she has appointed a young and handsome leader for the Egyptian troops. Rhadamès, who has taken a lively interest in this news, is startled by the significant look and tone of the high priest; and when the latter leaves him to announce the goddess's choice to the king, he cannot help wondering whether he can be the divinely appointed leader. The possibility fills him with rapture, for his

youthful imagination depicts a triumphant return, at the head of a victorious army. His greatest delight, however, is the prospect of laying his laurels at the feet of Aïda, a noble captive, the attendant of the Egyptian princess.

In a beautiful romanza Rhadamès praises the charms of the fair girl he loves, and expresses the rapture he would feel, could he only restore her to her native blue skies, crown her with stars, and make her queen over all the world. As he thus pours out his love and admiration, the princess Amneris comes in unseen. She admires the handsome captain, and declares in an aside that any woman might be proud to win his love. Then, addressing him, she tries to find out whether his affections are already engaged. Jealous of his secret, Rhadamès tells her he was dreaming of military glory and not of love, as she seems to suppose. But he changes colour so abruptly when Aïda comes upon the scene that the princess discovers his passion, and bitterly realises that he has never given a thought to her.

Concealing her jealousy, and feigning great kindness, Amneris embraces her slave, calling her sister and bidding her reveal the cause of her evident sadness. Aïda reluctantly admits that she is terrified at the thought of a new war,

because all her relatives will be in danger. But Amneris wishes to know more, and asks whether love has no part in her sorrows. Thus questioned, Aïda admits that she loves and is unhappy; but before her mistress can ascertain the object of her affections, the King of Egypt comes into the room. He is accompanied by his guards and all the priests, and having taken his seat, receives the report of a messenger, who describes how the sacred soil of the Nile Valley has been desecrated by the foot of the invader. He adds that, emboldened by the lack of resistance, the enemy is even now on his way to the City of the Hundred Gates.

While all exclaim that the bold leader of the Ethiopians must be Amonasro, their king, Aïda gasps the words, "My father!" They are fortunately unheard by the assembled people, who listen to the king's announcement that the goddess Isis has designated Rhadamès as leader of the Egyptian troops. Amid the acclamations of all present, who are greatly pleased with this appointment, Rhadamès thanks Heaven for thus crowning his dearest wishes, while Aïda shudders at the thought of his danger. Then the king bids Rhadamès betake himself to the temple to don the consecrated armour, ere he marches boldly forward to meet

the advancing foe. This speech ended, the priests chant a hymn, purporting that their main reliance is in their divinity, the soldiers valiantly pledge themselves to fight for their native land, Amneris gives a banner to the young captain, and Aïda mourns over the cruel fate which arms her lover against her father and brothers.

All now leave the hall, chanting the Egyptian war-cry, and adjuring Rhadamès soon to return in triumph. Aïda, left alone, gives vent to her perplexing emotions, and alternately prays for the success of her father, who is invading the country to deliver her from bondage, and for that of her lover. Her wishes are so divided, that she despairingly calls for death to come and release her from all her sorrows and perplexities.

The next scene represents the interior of one of the Memphian temples, with its tall stately columns, and numerous statues of the Egyptian gods. The light, falling from above, strikes in full upon the altar, where incense is burning in golden vessels. Priests and priestesses have all assembled ; and while Ramphis is absorbed in silent prayer, the women sing a hymn to Phthah, accompanying themselves upon their harps. The strain is next taken up by the men ; as they conclude, Rhadamès enters, and while he goes to

the altar, the priestesses execute the sacred dance. Then a veil of silver tissue is thrown over the head of the young man, whom the high priest solemnly addresses, urging him to prove worthy of the charge intrusted to his hands. After an impressive prayer for divine aid and guidance, Rhadamès dons the sacred armour, while the priestesses resume the mystic dance with which this scene closes.

The next act opens in Amneris' private apartments, where her slaves are busy adorning her for a great festival in honour of the return of the victorious army. While the slave girls sing of the conqueror and his achievements, Moorish slave boys execute a quaint dance for the diversion of their royal mistress, and wave their gorgeous feather fans to and fro. But when Aïda appears, Amneris dismisses all her other attendants, for she is determined to find out whether her suspicions are correct. With feigned tenderness, the princess addresses her slave, telling her that present sorrows will soon be forgotten, and peace and joy reign in her heart. Aïda sadly questions the possibility of ever being happy again, and, beguiled by Amneris' apparent sympathy, gradually acknowledges that part of her sorrows are caused by love. As she does not seem inclined to be more explicit, the

princess suddenly gives her to understand that Rhadamès is dead. Frantic with grief at these tidings, Aïda can no longer conceal her secret, and the jealous princess learns how dearly she loves him. Full of anger that her slave should aspire to marry the man she loves, Amneris tauntingly tells her that although Rhadamès is not dead, he is destined to lead a nobler bride to the altar. Then, further to vent her rage upon the unhappy Aïda, she orders her to attend her to the festivities, where, crouching at her mistress' feet, she shall witness the degradation of her people and the return of the hero.

In the next scene, we behold an imposing avenue of gigantic sphinxes, bordered by palms and temples, and with the royal platform on one side. The scene is thronged with Egyptians, who sing the praises of Isis and of their mighty king. They are anxiously awaiting the return of Rhadamès, for whom they have erected triumphal arches. The women say they will strew his pathway with flowers, and they dance a symbolical ballet, which represents the revolution of the stars around the beneficent sun. The priests, however, extol the heavenly power which has enabled the army to overcome their foes.

In the mean while, the king and princess have taken their seats upon their thrones, their

attendants grouped around them, and Aïda is cowering at Amneris' feet. As the chorus ends, a brilliant fanfare heralds the approach of the Egyptian host, and the troops file slowly past the king, playing stirring military music. The trumpeters are followed by soldiers, war-chariots, men carrying the statues of the conquered gods, dancing girls, slaves bearing the spoils, and last of all appears Rhadamès, under a rich canopy borne by twelve officers.

The king now graciously welcomes the young hero, hailing him as the saviour of his country, and then leads him to Amneris, so she may crown him with her own fair hands. Then, being asked to make his dearest wishes known, Rhadamès begs that the king will first inspect the prisoners, who are now brought before him. Among them is an old man, dressed as an officer; and as he advances, Aïda cannot repress a shriek of recognition, for it is her father. Amneris is overjoyed at having the father of her hated rival at her mercy, and exults over it, while Amonasro hastily cautions his daughter not to betray his rank. Then, questioned by the king, he acknowledges that he is the father of the captive Aïda, and says that he vainly sought death on the field of battle. He reports that he saw his monarch fall, and claims that his only crime is to

have fought for his native land. But, although ready to die himself, Amonasro begs the king to release the other captives, reminding him that fortune is fickle and that the day may come when he too will be glad to have mercy shown to him. His plea is so eloquent that it touches the hearts of all except the priests, who, while the women beg the king to be merciful, fiercely urge him to sacrifice all the captives to their gods, as usual. The people reprove the priests for their harshness; while Rhadamès gazes sadly upon poor Aïda, — a glance which Amneris perceives and which fills her heart with jealous rage.

The king is about to yield to the prayers of the majority, when Rhadamès, who has been too engrossed by Aïda's unhappiness to pay much attention to what is going on, suddenly begs him to fulfil the promise he has just made by setting all the prisoners free. The priest and Amneris object; but, after some discussion, the king declares that all the captives may go, except Aïda and her father, who shall remain in Egypt as hostages. Then, wishing to do honour to the victor, he publicly promises him the hand of his only daughter, Amneris, telling him that they two shall, in time, rule over the whole land. This announcement, so welcome to Amneris and the people, is heard

with dismay by Rhadamès and Aïda, and the scene closes amid rejoicings, lamentations, and admonitions on the part of the various actors, who simultaneously express their conflicting emotions.

The next act is played in a romantic spot on the banks of the Nile, very near the temple of Isis, which is flooded by moonlight. Within the sacred edifice, hymns of praise are heard, as a boat draws near the shore, and Amneris and her attendants land. The high priest invites the princess into the sacred edifice, telling her to pray for a blessing upon her approaching nuptials, and Amneris declares she will pray that Rhadamès may love her only, as she goes into the temple.

Only one of the veiled women remains outside; it is the unhappy Aïda, who expects Rhadamès to meet her here for the last time. She is very sad, for she has decided to drown herself in the Nile as soon as she has bidden her lover farewell, and she never expects to see the blue skies of her native land again.

Instead of her lover, her father is the first to appear, and he tells her that he has come to propose a plan whereby they shall both be able to return home, and she shall not be compelled to resign the man she loves to the haughty daughter of the Pharaoh. With consummate

skill he first reminds her of all her people suffered at the Egyptians' hands. Then, having worked her up to the required pitch, he tells her that the Ethiopians have again rebelled, and that she must find out from Rhadamès which road the Egyptian army will follow in the coming campaign. When Aïda finally understands what her father wishes her to do, she recoils in horror. But, urged by Amonasro's vehement command, and terrified by the visions he conjures up of her butchered countrymen, she finally consents to do as he wishes. Satisfied with this promise, Amonasro hides behind some neighbouring rocks as soon as Rhadamès comes upon the scene.

The young man greets Aïda rapturously, but when she coldly answers him by reminding him he is pledged to the princess, he vehemently protests that he loves her only. He adds that when he returns from the present campaign, he will confess all to the king, and implore his permission to marry the slave Aïda, rather than the princess Amneris. Aïda tells him such a scheme is impossible, because the jealous princess would be sure to avenge herself. Then she suggests that Rhadamès flee with her to her native country, where they might spend their lives together in wedded bliss.

She pleads so eloquently that he would fain yield ; but honour restrains him, and he tells her he cannot go. He assures her, however, that he will never marry Amneris ; but Aïda tells him that such a refusal on his part would entail her immediate execution. Trembling for her life, Rhadamès now determines to flee with her to Ethiopia, leaving all for her sake. He is about to draw her away when she suddenly asks him what route the army will follow, and how they can best avoid being seen. Little suspecting her motive, Rhadamès tells her. Amonasro, who has overheard all their conversation, now appears, saying he is Aïda's father, the King of the Ethiopians, and declaring that he and his army can now surprise and defeat the Egyptians.

Rhadamès is appalled at the thought of having betrayed his country, however unconsciously. Amonasro and Aïda both try to comfort him and to drag him away, and they are about to depart when the high priest and Amneris rush out of the temple, with their attendants and guards. They have overheard the conversation, and loudly accuse Rhadamès of treachery. In the confusion Aïda and her father manage to escape ; but Rhadamès, too proud to flee, is made prisoner.

The next scene shows a hall in the king's palace, with the prison and the subterranean hall of judgment on either side of it. The princess is alone, and she bitterly comments upon the fact that Aïda and her father have escaped, and that her jealousy has only endangered the life of the man she still loves so passionately. She has ordered him to be brought into her presence, so Rhadamès soon appears, attended by his guards. Although Amneris now offers him freedom and forgiveness if he will only renounce Aïda, he remains firm and says he prefers death to perjury.

Seeing she cannot prevail upon him to yield to her wishes, Amneris signals to the guards to lead him away. From her seat she sees the priests go into the judgment hall, where they summon Rhadamès. Then they thrice call upon him to exculpate himself from the charge of betraying state secrets to the enemy, deserting his post, and proving a traitor to his country and his king.

The prisoner hears their accusations in silence ; and seeing he will not defend himself, the priests solemnly pronounce him guilty, and sentence him to be buried alive in the vault under the altar of their god. Amneris is terrified when she hears this awful doom ; and when the

priests leave the judgment hall, she intercepts them to urge that he does not deserve such cruel treatment; but all refuse to listen to her, and withdraw, declaring that he must die.

In the next scene, the stage is divided into two horizontal parts, — the upper showing the brilliantly illuminated temple, and the lower the subterranean recess beneath the altar. The darkness of this place is so intense, that it is difficult to discern the steps leading down from the altar, over which the priests are slowly replacing a heavy stone. Rhadamès is seated on the steps of his prison, whence he knows he can never escape. But even now, he thinks more of Aïda than of himself, and he is just expressing a hope that she will never learn how he died, when he is startled by a groan. At the same moment, a form appears through the gloom, and when it draws near enough to him he recognises his beloved Aïda.

In answer to his inquiry, she tells him that, foreseeing his doom, she crept down here unseen to die with him, since fate has denied them every other boon. Rhadamès rapturously embraces her, but he laments her untimely fate, and gazes lovingly upon the features where sorrow has already traced its mark.

Aïda's sufferings have been so intense, that

her strength soon fails her; and while he supports her, she begins to rave of the angel of death, who is coming to bear them both to a heavenly home. Meanwhile, overhead, the priestesses tread their mystic dances; and Rhadamès, seeing Aïda needs more air, frantically tries to raise the stone, which remains firm in spite of all his efforts. Seeing he cannot move it, he finally goes back to Aïda; and clasped in each other's arms, they bid farewell to earth, and welcome death, which unites all true lovers.

The air of the vault is so deadly, that they soon sink to the ground lifeless. When they have breathed their last Amneris comes into the upper temple. Clad all in mourning, she flings herself upon the altar stone, and there prays in broken accents for the unhappy Rhadamès, trusting that Isis will now admit his purified soul into her radiant abode.

THE HUGUENOTS.

BORN in Berlin, in 1791, the very year that Mozart died, Meyerbeer, the son of a wealthy Jew banker, early showed signs of marked musical talent. He was taught by Clementi, Zelter, and Abbé Vögel, and after visiting Austria and Italy, took up his abode in Paris, where his first successful opera, "Robert le Diable," was produced in 1831, and made a fortune for the theatre.

Meyerbeer's next work, "The Huguenots," appeared five years later, and was somewhat coldly received, because it was so unlike its predecessor. Now, however, it is recognised as the composer's masterpiece; and while its music is beyond description, its dramatic force is such that it has been pronounced "the most vivid chapter of French history ever written."

Two other operas by Meyerbeer are still frequently given; these are "Le Prophète" and "L'Africaine." The composer laboured at the latter until he died, but it was produced only in 1865, two years after he had been laid to rest. The opera of "The Huguenots" being the most

popular, as well as the grandest of Meyerbeer's compositions, it has been selected to form part of this little volume.

In 1572, when religious difficulties were nearing a crisis in France, a party of gentlemen assembled in the great hall of the castle of Nevers. There they sat with their host, emptying their glasses, singing a merry chorus in praise of wine, and pledging Bacchus again and again. The curtain rises upon this gay scene, where the Count of Nevers encourages his guests. Touching glasses with Raoul de Naugis, the only Huguenot present, he proposes that they drink to the tender passion, and suggests that each man relate his love-affair for the diversion of his companions. The proposal is welcomed enthusiastically; and Raoul, being called upon to speak first, timidly recounts how he once saved a fair unknown from the hands of brutal students. He says that, having scattered her assailants, he beheld an angelic face. Such was its influence upon him, that, bending the knee before the stranger, he instantly and impetuously vowed to love her for ever, an oath she seemed to receive with joy.

As Raoul finishes his story, his old Huguenot servant appears upon the scene. He is greatly shocked to find his young master in the company

THE PARTING.

of the ungodly, and solemnly reminds him of the scriptural injunction to flee from the wicked. Raoul tries to excuse his attendant by saying he has been brought up in a Huguenot camp, where he was taught to abhor the Pope and his power, as well as all the pleasures of life.

But, when the guests resume their drinking chorus, Marcel solemnly intones the Huguenot hymn. One of the guests then recognises the soldier as one who wounded him at the siege of La Rochelle. Although disfigured by a scar, he owes his foe no grudge; and as Marcel refuses to drink with him, he calls upon the Huguenot to give them a song. The old servant, nothing loath, now sings the fierce Huguenot battle song, which, as he illustrates, was often accompanied by explosions of muskets and by the savage cries of the soldiers, grimly dooming their adversaries to death and destruction.

As this martial song comes to an end, a servant approaches the Count of Nevers, telling him that an unknown lady wishes an audience. The amazed count excuses himself and goes out, and, as the guests are all devoured by curiosity to see the stranger, they take turns in peeping at her through the curtains.

Raoul is the last to look, and he cries out in surprise that the count's visitor is his beautiful

unknown, as De Nevers respectfully escorts her across the scene and takes leave of her at the door. Before his friends can ask any explanation, a page comes upon the scene, bearing a letter. The count claims it, but it is handed to Raoul de Naugis, who proceeds to read it aloud. It informs him that a court carriage awaits him, and that if he is a man of courage, he will enter it blindfolded and will allow himself to be conducted wherever his unknown correspondent wishes. The letter seems very mysterious to Raoul; but when he hands it to his companions, they all address him with new respect, for one and all recognise the crest of the fair princess, Marguerite of Valois, and feel certain that he has found favour at court. While they urge him to depart, the aged Marcel, who merely understands that Raoul must go, gives audible thanks that the Lord has seen fit to rescue his master from the company of the godless.

The next scene represents the gardens of the castle of Chenonceaux, where Marguerite of Valois, attended by her maids of honour, sings of the lovely province of Touraine. She says its fair fields will soon be drenched in blood, if no way is found of reconciling the contending religious parties, who ought to remember that earth, air, and heaven whisper only of love. Her ladies

and a page vainly try to dispel her melancholy, and all withdraw when Valentina comes upon the scene. She tells Marguerite that the Count of Nevers gallantly consented to release her from her engagement, when she went to beg him to do so, and blushes vividly when Marguerite announces that she has sent for Raoul de Naugis, and that a new marriage will soon be satisfactorily arranged.

The maids of honour again come trooping on the stage with the village girls; and while some find seats in the shade, others dance on the greensward, or disport themselves in the cool waters. All sing of the charms of the "vale of rest," and the ripple and flow of the stream is heard in the delicate orchestral accompaniment.

Suddenly Urbain, the page, appears, and tells them that a blindfolded stranger is coming this way, escorted by mocking boys, and pelted with roses by the village girls. The bathers vanish, and a few moments later the blindfolded Raoul is led down the flight of steps, to a position directly opposite Marguerite. She addresses him by name and bids him remove his veil.

Raoul has no sooner obeyed, than he gazes spellbound upon the beautiful princess, wondering if she is a goddess; then he tenders her the devotion which his false unknown no longer

deserves. His gallant appearance greatly prepossesses Marguerite, who no longer wonders that Valentina should prefer this handsome youth to her former betrothed, the elderly Count of Nevers. At her summons, the court nobles assemble, and Catholics and Protestants range themselves on either side of her. She now introduces Raoul to St. Bris and De Nevers, both of whom receive him cordially. A gentleman of the court hands Marguerite a letter, summoning the nobles to join the king in Paris; but she declares that ere they leave her presence, they must solemnly swear to consider each other as brothers and to forget all religious differences. All gladly obey; and, the oath of good fellowship taken, Marguerite bids St. Bris give his daughter in marriage to Raoul, thus cementing the newly made bond between Protestants and Catholics.

No objection is made to the match until St. Bris reappears on the scene with Valentina. But when he offers her to Raoul, the latter, thinking she is the betrothed of De Nevers, loyally refuses to receive her hand. This rejection fills her with shame and confusion, and calls down upon his head the anger of all the spectators, who are only with difficulty restrained from avenging this insult upon the spot.

The next act opens on a meadow on the banks of the Seine. In front of an inn near by, Catholic students and girls are sitting, while Huguenot men and women have taken possession of the hostelry opposite. There is a chapel in the background, and citizens pass to and fro singing of work. Meanwhile the Huguenots lustily roar their battle song, imitating the beating of the drum, and boasting of the feats they have performed for their leader Coligny.

As they finish, a bridal procession enters the chapel, and the maids of honour sing an Ave Maria, as they escort De Nevers and Valentina to the altar. They have scarcely gone when Marcel appears upon the scene, asking for St. Bris. The Catholics denounce the old man as a heretic, the Huguenots uphold him; and both factions try to drown each other's voices by singing their respective war songs at the top of their lungs.

In the next scene the square is deserted, until St. Bris, De Nevers, and Maurevel come out of the chapel alone. The bridegroom says he has allowed his bride to spend the remainder of the day at the altar in fulfilment of a vow, and adds that he is to come and claim her only at nightfall. When he has gone to make ready to receive Valentina, St. Bris congratulates him-

self upon having won so noble a son-in-law. He further expresses a desire to be avenged upon Raoul, who has dared to reject his daughter's proffered hand. He is therefore greatly pleased when Marcel appears, bearing a challenge from Raoul, and appointing the hour at which he will meet St. Bris on this very spot Maurevel advises St. Bris not to tell De Nevers that he intends to fight, lest he trouble the wedding festivities. Then, forgetting Valentina is still there, he drags his companion into the chapel, to confide to him the secret of a horrible plot to massacre all the Huguenots that very night.

Darkness falls upon the city, the curfew bell rings, the city patrolman makes his rounds, and all have gone to rest, when the two conspirators leave the chapel. As soon as they have gone, Valentina comes down the steps, determined to save Raoul, for she has heard her father and Maurevel plotting against him and all his fellow-believers. She and Marcel meet in the darkness on the square. They recognise each other, lament because they cannot warn Raoul of his peril, and swear to do all they can for the man they both love.

Then Marcel gently comforts poor Valentina, and promises to do his best to defend Raoul.

Having persuaded her to return into the chapel, he awaits the arrival of St. Bris and Raoul, who appear simultaneously with their seconds. In vain the old servant tells his master to look out for treachery; Raoul refuses to believe he has to deal with any but honourable adversaries. The preliminaries being settled, they are about to begin fighting, when Marcel suddenly stops them. He announces the coming of Maurevel's hirelings, who surround the defenceless Raoul. Frantic with terror for the safety of his young master, Marcel batters on the door of the inn where the Huguenots are still singing, and at his call they come trooping out. They find themselves face to face with the Catholics, who rush out of the opposite inn at the call of St. Bris.

The two parties face each other, hurl invectives to and fro, and are about to come to blows when Marguerite of Valois appears on horseback, escorted by her guards, and demands the meaning of all this tumult. St. Bris and Raoul mutually accuse each other of having caused the disturbance, but Marcel says that he can prove treachery was intended, as yonder lady overheard the plot. Speaking thus, he points to Valentina, who now steps forward, and in the ensuing explanation Raoul finds out from Mar-

guerite that Valentina had visited De Nevers merely to obtain her release from her engagement to him. This discovery comes too late, for not only has the marriage ceremony already taken place, but De Nevers now comes upon the scene in an illuminated barge, to conduct his bride to his own house, while his attendants wish them every joy in a grand bridal chorus.

As the barge disappears, the heart-broken Raoul is supported by his servant, while the soldiers, whose animosity is held in check only by the presence of Marguerite, exchange threatening glances and swear perpetual enmity.

In the third act, Valentina, who has just come to her husband's castle, steps out of her apartment into the great hall, where she gives voice to the sorrow she feels, and invokes the help of God. Suddenly Raoul enters, for he has made his way into the house in hopes of seeing her once more. Before his explanation is ended, Valentina hears her father and husband approaching, and forces Raoul to hide behind a great curtain. The door opens, and De Nevers and St. Bris usher in a large party of Catholic noblemen. They announce that they have brought them thither to impart the secret of a plot formed by Catherine de Médicis, the dowager queen, who wishes them to exterminate all

the Protestants. Becoming aware, only then, of the presence of his daughter, St. Bris tries to send her away ; but De Nevers, seeing her evident desire to remain, obtains permission for her to hear all that is about to transpire, by reminding his father-in-law that she is a staunch Catholic.

The terrified Valentina now learns the plans for the St. Bartholomew massacre, which is to begin when the bells in the tower of the Church of St. Germain L'Auxerrois ring the second time. Her father addresses the conspirators, who all solemnly swear to execute the queen's orders. The noble-hearted De Nevers alone refuses to take the oath, saying he is ready to meet the foe face to face, but will never stoop to play the part of an assassin. Fearing he may reveal their plot, St. Bris summons his guards and bids them lead away De Nevers, whose noble refusal has roused the admiration of Valentina, and her pity for his harsh treatment.

St. Bris now assigns to his men their various posts ; and when his instructions have all been given, three monks come into the hall, carrying a basket full of white scarfs, the rallying sign of the Catholics. They solemnly intone a hymn, bless the swords of the conspirators, and urge all present to fight and exterminate the Huguenots,

for such is the will of God. Excited by their address, the nobles fiercely pledge themselves to kill old and young, without mercy, or regard to sex. St. Bris then reminds them of the necessity of silence and secrecy, so they repeat their threats in less noisy tones, and file out to take up their appointed stations, and await the signal for the massacre to begin.

When all but Valentina have gone, Raoul comes out of his hiding-place and rushes toward the door to warn his companions of their danger. But the door is locked, and before he can find another way out, Valentina stops him, imploring him not to leave her. A grand duet now takes place between the two young people; and while Raoul urges the necessity of immediate action, if he would save his friends from the awful fate which awaits them, she pleads with him not to betray her father and husband, who, she assures him, are obeying the mandate of God. Raoul is shocked at her credulity, and tries to get away from her; but she, fearing he will be slain if he ventures out into the street, clings to him despairingly, and finally confesses that she loves him.

At this avowal, Raoul forgets his friends and their danger, and implores Valentina to repeat these welcome words. Their rapture is soon at

an end, however, for Valentina shudders at the first boom of the fatal bell, which Raoul does not hear. While he is pleading with her to come with him and leave the house of the man to whom she has just been married against her will, he hears the second bell, and, suddenly roused from his dream of bliss, rushes away in spite of Valentina's frantic efforts to hold him back. As he dashes out into the street, to die with his friends if he cannot save them, he commits the unconscious and apparently dead Valentina to the care of Heaven.

The fourth act represents the ball-room in the Tower of Nesle, where many nobles have assembled to celebrate the marriage of Marguerite of Valois to Henry of Navarre. The revelry is interrupted by the booming of the alarm-bell, the cries of the assassins, the explosions of the firearms, and the groans of the dying. These sounds, barely audible at first, become louder and louder, until the guests have all gone out to see what they may mean.

The next scene represents an enclosed cemetery near a small church, within whose sacred walls women and children are hastening to seek refuge. Raoul and Marcel, coming upon the scene from opposite sides, are overjoyed to find each other once more; and Marcel gives

his master a hurried account of the frightful scenes he has witnessed on his way hither.

They are interrupted by the entrance of the breathless and dishevelled Valentina, who prevents Raoul from again rushing out into the midst of the fray, by imploring him to remain with her and protect her, for her husband is dead. Raoul fancies she is raving, until Marcel explains that the gallant De Nevers died while defending him from the assassins into whose hands he had fallen.

Although he can now remain by Valentina's side with honour, Raoul nevertheless urges her to leave him to his fate. But when she says she had rather adopt his faith and die with him, than part from him again, he induces Marcel to marry them on the spot, so that inevitable death may find them united.

While the simple ceremony is being performed in the cemetery, the women are heard singing a solemn hymn within the church. But their litany is suddenly interrupted by the assassins, who, with fierce cries of extermination, rush in among the worshippers and put them to death.

Marcel, Raoul, and Valentina hear a last discharge of the guns, which hush for ever the voices of those who were singing their last hymn,—then dead silence reigns. The aged Marcel, look-

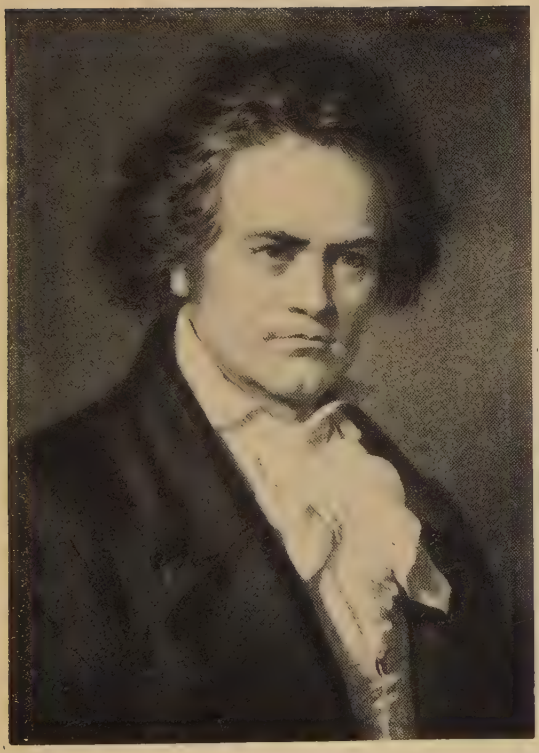
ing upward, suddenly sees the heavens open, and beholds the angelic choir coming to welcome the souls of those who have died martyrs to their faith. But the lovers, who cannot see the heavenly host, stare at Marcel in awe; and finally all three sing of the bliss awaiting them in the heavenly mansions.

Just then the cemetery gates fly open, and the assassins rush across the scene, summoning Raoul, Valentina, and Marcel to abjure, and madly discharging their weapons upon them, ere they hurry on to further bloodshed. Raoul falls mortally wounded, but, supported by Marcel and Valentina, he appears in the next scene painfully hobbling along toward the Seine in hopes of making his escape. The night is far advanced; the stars are shining brightly; and a distant chorus of soldiers is heard proclaiming that all the Huguenots must perish by fire or by the sword. Soon after, St. Bris comes upon the scene with his company of musketeers. He sees the little group, and promptly challenges them. Although sorely wounded, and restrained by Valentina, who lays her hand over his mouth bidding him keep silence, Raoul manages to answer, "Huguenots." Valentina and Marcel, determined to die with him, echo his cry, when St. Bris orders his men to fire. A volley lays

them low. Valentina, recognising her father then, utters a last despairing cry. It brings him horror-stricken to her side, but only to receive her last farewell, and the promise that she will intercede for him in heaven.

As she sinks back lifeless, Marguerite of Valois comes upon the stage, borne in her palanquin, and utters a cry of dismay at the sight of St. Bris bending over his daughter's body. She motions to the soldiers to stop, and as the chorus proclaims that the last heretics have fallen, the curtain drops upon one of the most tragic operas of the modern stage. The great length of this opera makes sundry cuts imperative, so it frequently ends with the third act. In such cases, the Catholics rush into the castle of Nevers and kill Raoul and Valentina immediately after their duet, while the hymns of the dying Huguenots are heard out on the street in the midst of the constant shooting of the assassins and their fierce cry, —

> "Huguenots, abjure, your faith deny,
> Or Heav'n commands that ye must die!"



BEETHOVEN.

FIDELIO.

BEETHOVEN had just completed his oratorio, "Christ on the Mount of Olives," and was in the prime of youthful strength, when he began to write his first and only opera. Although he called it "Leonore," it is generally known as "Fidelio," to distinguish it from other compositions bearing the former name. Beethoven's work, which, as far as music is concerned, "stands above every other opera," was based upon a libretto by Bouilly, which had already been scored by the Frenchman, Gaveaux, and by the Italian, Paer. It was translated into German by Sonnleithner, and Beethoven wrote the music for it during a summer sojourn at Hetzendorf.

The opera was first produced at Vienna in 1805; but owing to the French occupation, the length of the performance, and the difficulties of the music, it was so badly sung, that Beethoven insisted upon sitting out of earshot, so as to spare himself the mortification of hearing his work bungled. The audience, among other distin-

guished guests, included Cherubini ; still, so few of Beethoven's friends were present, that the opera was not kindly received, and the composer's detractors loudly proclaimed that "never before had anything so incoherent, coarse, wild, and ear-splitting been heard."

After three performances, the opera was withdrawn by Beethoven himself, who, two years later, modified it to suit Breuning's revised libretto. Then, in spite of being shortened, it was played but twice, and was buried in the dusty theatre library for several years. In 1814, the libretto was again altered by Treitschke, and the composer adapted his music so that a new performance could be given at Vienna. This time the opera proved a grand success, and since then it has been heard everywhere. Four different overtures were written for Fidelio ; they are, however, generally known as the "Leonore Overtures," and are distinguished only by numbers. The plot of this famous opera is as follows : —

The first scene is played in the prison courtyard of a fortress near Seville, where many political offenders are kept in close captivity. The cells, with their heavy iron doors and barred windows, run along the left side of the stage. Iron palings and a garden gate separate

this court from the castle gardens, and in the background is the principal gateway, with the porter's dwelling close beside it. When the curtain rises, Marcellina, the jailer's daughter, is ironing near her door, while Jacquino, her lover, mounts guard at the wicket gate, where his attention is often required to receive packages and messages. A lull in the day's business allows him to draw near Marcellina, with whom he is anxious to have a few moments of uninterrupted conversation, so he can persuade her to marry him without further delay. But the girl has lately secured another lover, Fidelio, and, hoping to prevent Jacquino's pressing her for an immediate answer, frequently interrupts him, and gladly welcomes every knock which calls him away from her side. The maiden's coquettish evasions, and the constant rapping at the postern gate, exasperate poor Jacquino, who, after thrice beginning his argument over again, and thrice crossly dismissing the people who call at the gate, hears Rocco, the jailer, loudly calling for him. He is determined not to move until he has attained his object, but Marcellina urges him to go to her father immediately, adding that the latter probably wishes to inquire what has become of Fidelio, who should have returned from the city some time ago. Jacquino

leaves her, grumbling against Fidelio, but imploring her to remain where she is, as he will soon be back and still has much to say. All through this scene, Marcellina secretly pities Jacquino, whom she had fully intended to marry before Fidelio came. But she now thinks her whole heart belongs to the latter, and longs for the time when they will be united, and she can keep house for the man she loves, and make his home pleasant by her industry. Her happy dreams of the future are broken by the return of her father and Jacquino. While the latter hastens across the scene to put away some gardening tools, the former approaches his pretty daughter and inquires whether Fidelio has come back. When the jailer hears the young man has not yet appeared, he seems anxious; for it is time to carry to the governor the letters which Fidelio was to bring. Marcellina is just explaining that the lad may have been detained at the blacksmith's, when a knock is heard, and the surly Jacquino admits Fidelio. In spite of a very slender form, — for Fidelio is Leonore, the disguised wife of one of the state prisoners, — the new-comer carries a heavy basket on his back, and has fetters hung over one arm and the despatch-box over the other. Marcellina, who, as well as the rest, has no suspicion of Fide-

lio's real identity, rushes forward to meet him, and after compassionately wiping the perspiration from his brow, helps her father remove the heavy basket. The solicitude of father and daughter only serves further to exasperate Jacquino, so he turns his back upon them and hastens into the lodge only to slip out unnoticed a few moments later, to watch the further proceedings of his hated rival. Fidelio now acknowledges that he is tired, gives the jailer a detailed account of his purchases, and, when Rocco congratulates him upon the clever bargains he has made, modestly answers that he has done his best. Rocco, fancying that the young man is doing so much merely to win his favour and hasten a marriage with Marcellina, pointedly remarks that he shall soon have his reward. These words cover Fidelio with confusion, to the secret amusement of the jailer; and while Marcellina expresses her rapture at the happy turn affairs are taking, and her father says it is quite plain how dearly Fidelio loves her, the unhappy youth secretly expresses his fears, for he has assumed a disguise and made love to the jailer's daughter only in hopes of gaining access to the prisoner Florestan. At the same time Jacquino bitterly comments upon the change in his fortunes, and sullenly withdraws into his lodge.

Rocco next tells Fidelio he will make him his son-in-law the day after the governor's departure; and while Marcellina openly wishes that it may be soon, Fidelio secretly bewails the new complication. Pre-eminently a practical man, Rocco now explains to the young people that money is an indispensable adjunct to matrimony, for love is only too likely to fly out of the window if poverty shows its face at the door.

Fidelio says that gold is indeed an inestimable possession, but that entire trust is better still, and gently reproaches the jailer for never allowing him to help in the arduous labour of looking after the wants of the prisoners in the castle vaults. Rocco declares that he has received strict orders to admit no one, but Marcellina and Fidelio both insist that the numerous prisoners make it imperative to secure an assistant, or he will overtax his strength. Touched by the young people's solicitude, Rocco says that the governor must allow him to take Fidelio with him down into the dungeon, but adds that there is one cell into which he will never be able to take the youth. Questioned by Marcellina and Fidelio, he gradually reveals that the dungeon contains a prisoner, who has been there a long while. This man seems guilty of no particular crime, so he must have very powerful foes. He

has often tried to communicate with his keeper, although it is against orders, and now seems on the point of death, having been long subjected to a course of slow starvation. Fidelio betrays the liveliest interest in this account, and turns so faint at this moment, that Rocco fancies the duties will prove too trying for such a sympathetic nature. He therefore relates how he was obliged to harden his heart against the captives at first. But Fidelio assures him that he will not falter; and Marcellina says that his return to her will seem all the sweeter by contrast. The three now join in trio, in which it is agreed that the young people will shortly be united, and that Rocco will ask the governor to give him Fidelio as an assistant, so that the latter can relieve him as a good son should.

As Pizarro, the governor, draws near at this moment, the jailer seizes the despatch-box, and dismisses both young people. The governor now issues his orders to the guards, and opens his letters. He impatiently runs over those containing instructions and reproaches, but starts when he perceives one in a well-known hand. The guards and jailer having drawn aside, he peruses this missive aloud. It contains a warning that the minister is even now on his way to examine the fortress, where he has been

told that he will find numerous victims of arbitrary power. These tidings are most unwelcome to the governor, and he mutters that he will be undone if the minister discovers that he has kept Florestan a prisoner, and that the latter is not dead, as has long been supposed. Rather than be found out, Pizarro determines to make his position safe by murdering his prisoner. The guards, overhearing a word now and then, surmise he is about to execute some one. They go to their posts, and then Pizarro instructs an officer to go up in the tower, and to notify him by a trumpet blast as soon as he sees a carriage with escort coming from Seville. Having thus taken precautions against all surprise, the governor calls Rocco, and tries to bribe him to fulfil his wishes. The jailer is ready to do all his superior wishes; but when he discovers that he is expected to commit a murder, he offers to give back the money he has just received. Finding threats and persuasions equally unavailing, Pizarro tells the jailer he need only dig a grave in the disused cistern in Florestan's cell, and that he, the governor, will come down there in disguise and despatch his victim himself. This matter settled, Pizarro and Rocco pass into the garden; while Leonore, or Fidelio, coming out of the house, wonders for a moment what

new villany the governor is planning, and then openly rejoices because she has now some hope of seeing the prisoner she loves and of proving her wifely devotion. When Fidelio has left the scene, Marcellina appears, closely followed by Jacquino. The latter is still pleading for her love; for he does not see why he should be thrust aside in favour of a vagabond whom the jailer took into his employ through charity. Rocco, returning from the garden with Fidelio, finds them still quarrelling; and when Jacquino tries to justify himself, the jailer announces that he intends to give his daughter's hand to Fidelio. The latter now suggests it would be well to celebrate this happy day by giving the prisoners the solace of a little exercise in the open air. Although Rocco demurs at first, saying he dare not take such a responsibility, he finally yields to Fidelio's and Marcellina's entreaties, and directs Jacquino to help Fidelio set the prisoners free to enjoy the sunshine. Then he hurries off to join the governor, and obtain his leave to make Fidelio his permanent assistant.

The prisoners are now let out into the yard, where they rapturously hail the sunlight, and give thanks because a few minutes' freedom have been vouchsafed them. But when they see an officer peering at them over the wall, they

caution each other to be silent, lest the governor discover them and order them back into their gloomy cells. When Rocco returns, they stroll into the garden, while he explains to Fidelio not only the success of his petition, but the fact that they must both betake themselves down into the dungeon, to dig a grave for the unhappy wretch who has languished there so long. Fidelio is more and more horrified as Rocco proceeds, for he cannot help thinking that the mysterious captive must be Florestan. When he finally hears that he must help dig a grave, he wildly inquires whether the prisoner is dead, and even when reassured on that score, shows so much emotion that Rocco offers to go down alone. Of course, Fidelio will not consent to this, and they are about to leave the scene together, when Marcellina rushes up breathless. She announces that Pizarro is coming thither in a great passion, for one of the officers has told him that the prisoners are enjoying the open air. Rocco, terrified, orders Jacquino and Fidelio to lead the prisoners back into their cells, while he tries to disarm the governor's anger.

They have scarcely gone in quest of their charges, when Pizarro comes up with his guards. He is in a towering rage, and will not at first

listen to Rocco's attempts to excuse himself. But when the jailer whispers that he was just going down into the dungeon to carry out certain orders, Pizarro suddenly becomes more amenable, and bids him be quick. The prisoners are now marshalled back into their cells; and as they go, they sadly bid farewell to the radiant sunlight. Although Marcellina, Jacquino, and Fidelio apparently hurry them back into their cells, they secretly pity the poor wretches, and scorn the cruel governor, by whose orders they are now locked up once more.

The next act is played in Florestan's dungeon, where the faint light of a hanging lamp shines through the gloom. Heavy iron gratings divide the cell from the staircase and corridors; and it is only with some trouble that one can discern the prisoner, who is sitting on a great stone near the wall to which his chain is fastened. Florestan sadly comments upon his lengthy detention in this cheerless place, but exhorts himself to patience, and feels deeply thankful that no sense of guilt weighs upon him to add to his sorrows. Dreamily he sings of the happy past, until he fancies he feels the balmy breezes fan his cheek, and sees in vision an angelic form, which he takes to be his beloved Leonore coming to loosen his bonds. This momentary delusion

exhausts him so that he sinks back upon his stone, and covers his face with his hands. He is sitting thus, when Rocco and Fidelio come down the dungeon stairs and enter his cell. They carry lanterns, tools, and a pitcher of wine. The still disguised Leonore shivers at the cold, which Rocco says is the usual temperature of this disconsolate place; but, although she anxiously peers through the gloom, trying to catch a glimpse of the prisoner the jailer points out to her, she cannot make out whether he is the man she seeks. While working at the grave, under the directions of the jailer, she trembles and watches, and in sundry asides expresses her agonised feelings. A heap of rubbish is rapidly shovelled away by Rocco, — who repeatedly says they must hasten, as Pizarro will soon be there, — and then they see a heavy stone, which covers the condemned cistern. Leonore helps Rocco to lift it, and they begin to clear a space inside. While working, Rocco keeps exchanging remarks with his companion, who seizes every opportunity to steal a glance at the still motionless prisoner. Detecting this, the jailer bids his assistant work faster, and refreshes himself by taking a drink from the pitcher. At this moment Florestan raises his head; and as Leonore exclaims that he is waking up, Rocco goes toward

him, muttering that the man will doubtless ask many questions, which, after all, might as well be answered, seeing he has so short a time to live.

Florestan's first words thrill Leonore, for she fancies she recognises her husband's voice. A few moments later, when he turns his face in her direction, she sinks fainting on the edge of the grave, for she now knows it is really he. Rocco and Florestan, in the mean while, enter into conversation, and, in answer to the latter's question, the jailer reveals that the governor of the fortress is Pizarro. Realising that he is in the hands of a mortal foe, Florestan beseeches Rocco immediately to send word to his wife Leonore, at Seville. But when the jailer assures him that he cannot comply with this request, he wildly asks to be put to death promptly, and not be made to suffer so long.

His words fill Leonore's heart with the tenderest compassion, for she has gradually recovered her senses; and when she hears him plead for a little water to moisten his parched lips, she eagerly brings the pitcher to Rocco. The latter gives it to the prisoner, to whom he explains that the lad is his new assistant, and will shortly be his son-in-law as well. Leonore's emotion is so great, that both jailer and captive perceive it; and, ascribing it to pity, the latter

prays Heaven to reward her for her kindness. These words touch both Leonore and Rocco, and the prisoner frantically implores that some means may yet be found to reunite him to the wife he loves so well. Although somewhat strengthened by a bit of bread which Leonore draws out of her pocket and gives him with Rocco's permission, Florestan is so weak that he shivers with dread when he hears the jailer's loud whistle echo through the corridor, for he rightly conjectures it must be the signal for his death. But Leonore, still unrecognised, reassures him, and she solemnly adds that Providence is watching over him, ere she withdraws to the cistern. A moment later Pizarro appears, wrapped in a heavy mantle. Then, having ascertained from Rocco that all is ready, he bids him dismiss the lad. Twice Rocco tells Fidelio to go, and, seeing she must obey, Leonore retreats, but only to steal back in the gloom to a position close to Florestan. She therefore overhears Pizarro mutter that he must get rid of both jailers to-day, so they cannot betray him, and then sees him throw off his mantle. He fiercely tells the prisoner that he must die, and Florestan is appalled. But before the latter can defend himself, Pizarro raises a dagger and tries to stab him, just as Leonore

flings herself between them with a wild cry of despair.

This sudden and unexpected movement checks Pizarro for a moment, and he gazes mutely at her while she frantically vows to defend the prisoner. Pizarro tries to pull her away, swearing that he will kill his enemy, but Leonore tells him he shall do so only after slaying her, Florestan's wife. This revelation fills the prisoner's heart with joy, and wrings a cry of involuntary admiration from Pizarro and Rocco. Nevertheless the governor soon nerves his hand to despatch them both; but when he raises his dagger, Leonore points a pistol straight at him, threatening to kill him if he makes another motion. Just then, a trumpet call is heard, and Pizarro, realising his danger, stares helplessly at Rocco. A moment later, Jacquino comes down the steps with soldiers and officers, to announce that the minister has just come, and that he summons all the castle inmates into his presence. Pizarro dashes away with a cry of baffled rage; and Rocco follows him, giving audible thanks, while Florestan and Leonore clasp each other close, and sing a beautiful duet about the bliss of reunion. Their raptures are scarcely ended when Rocco again appears, to lead them into the presence of the minister. He tells them that as Flor-

estan's name does not figure on the list of the guilty, it is quite evident he has been unlawfully imprisoned and will soon be released.

The next scene represents the principal court of the castle. The guard march in, preceding the minister, Pizarro, and the officers. The people all crowd around to see what is going to happen, when the state prisoners are brought in by Jacquino and Marcellina. As soon as the captives perceive the minister, they all fall on their knees before him, fervently thanking him for coming at last to do them justice. The minister solemnly assures them that the king is no tyrant, but has sent orders to free all state prisoners from their bonds. At that moment Rocco and Leonore appear, carefully supporting Florestan, and begging help for a poor captive. The governor grows pale with terror when he sees them, and tries to prevent their advance; but Rocco, raising his voice, manages to attract the minister's attention. The sight of Florestan, who had fought bravely for truth and right, but who had long been thought dead, fills the minister's heart with surprise, and mingled pity and delight. When Rocco presents Leonore, telling how she assumed a disguise and bore the hardest tasks to rescue her husband, Marcellina starts in dismay. The jailer

goes on to relate how Pizarro tried to bribe him to kill Florestan; how he and Leonore were compelled to go down in the dungeon to dig a grave; and, finally, how Pizarro would have slain his victim, had not Leonore's courage and the minister's arrival frustrated his wicked plans.

Pizarro vainly tries to check this revelation, but is silenced by the minister, who bids Leonore remove her husband's chains with her own hands. Freed from his heavy fetters, Florestan rapturously embraces his wife, whose courage and devotion are extolled by all present. Florestan is delighted with this tribute; but Leonore can think of nothing except that her husband is free, and that they will never be parted again. The opera now closes with a grand finale, in which all take part; and the curtain falls upon general happiness, for a glance exchanged between Marcellina and Jacquino shows that they too are friends, and that their passing misunderstanding is at an end.

DON GIOVANNI.

MOZART, who made his first appearance before the musical public of his native city of Salzburg before he was six years old, soon after began a series of tours through Europe with his father and sister. The two children, who were both musical prodigies, gave concerts in all the principal cities they visited. They were received at court, and in the houses of princes and great men, where they charmed every one by their remarkable performances. Even at that early age, Mozart played with equal facility on the pianoforte, organ, and violin, and he had already done considerable work in composition. When only twelve, he wrote his first opera; and the next year, during a voyage in Italy, he amazed every one by writing out all the music of Allegri's "Miserere," although he had only heard it once, and had never seen a note of the score.

His first great opera, and his sixteenth dramatic work, was the "Marriage of Figaro," which met with immediate success at Vienna.

MOZART AT THE ORGAN.

Such was the enthusiasm with which it was received there, that the director of the theatre of Prague soon produced it in his turn, and invited Mozart to come and witness its great popularity. The young composer was so delighted with its reception, that he cried that "he should like to compose an opera for so intelligent and appreciative a public." The impresario took advantage of this remark to make a contract with Mozart for a new work.

After some hesitation Mozart and his librettist, Da Ponte, selected the subject which forms the basis of a Spanish tale by De Molino, and of the French tragedy, "Le Festin de Pierre," by Molière. The music was composed in the inn at Prague, or out in the summer-house of Duschek, where Mozart wrote at a stone table, interrupting himself from time to time to take part in the conversation or games of skittles.

Mozart was noted for his procrastination, so not one bar of his overture had been put on paper on the eve of the performance of the opera, which was called "Don Giovanni," or "The Punishment of a Dissolute Man." To keep the composer awake, his wife told him fairy tales, and administered occasional glasses of weak punch; but, as the work could only be handed over to the copyist the next morning, it was not

rehearsed, and had to be played at sight on the night of the first performance, October 29, 1787.

Although well received at Prague, it failed to please the Viennese audiences when given there the next year; and we are told that every one, except the composer, thought the piece must be remodelled. Fortunately, it remained unchanged, and it is now generally recognised as a work of great genius, "containing a world of harmonies within itself."

The scene of "Don Giovanni," or "Don Juan," as the opera is indifferently called, is laid in a Castilian village; and as the curtain first rises, we behold a square with the house of the Commander on one side, and the inn on the other. The night is far advanced when Leporello, Don Giovanni's body-servant, comes upon the scene, singing of the arduous and perilous tasks he has to perform for an ungrateful master. He would like, however, to change places with the latter, who is even now trying to get into the apartments of a beautiful lady, whom he wishes to seduce.

A sudden outcry causes Leporello to hide, as Don Giovanni comes upon the scene, closely pursued by Donna Anna. She cries aloud for help, and declares that the man who intruded into her presence shall not escape unpunished.

In vain Don Giovanni tries to escape; she clings fast to him, and it is only when her father, the Commander, appears, that she consents to loose her hold. Challenged to immediate fight by the irate father, Don Giovanni hesitates at first to attack so old a man, but he is soon forced to draw his sword, and in a few moments the Commander falls, loudly calling for help.

Perceiving in the darkness that his assailant is dead, Don Giovanni, after reassuring his trembling servant, holds a short conversation with the latter; then, fearing detection, hastily leaves the scene with him, while Donna Anna reappears with Don Octavio and servants bearing torches. Although Don Octavio swears he is ready to shed every drop of blood in his body in Donna Anna's service, he soon discovers that her assailant has fled, and, as the light falls upon her father's corpse, gives vent to an awe-struck exclamation. Donna Anna falls on her knees beside the Commander, and, finding he is dead, faints away. Alarmed at her condition, Don Octavio calls for restoratives, and then, seeing she is returning to her senses, directs the servants to carry the body into the house. Tenderly addressing the bereaved daughter, he now implores her to live for his sake, promising to replace, as far as he is able, the father whom

she mourns. But Donna Anna pays no heed to his protestations of undying affection until he solemnly promises to avenge her dead father; then she allows him to lead her back into the house.

In the next scene, Don Giovanni and his servant again meet in the street, and the master, seeing his efficient helper is displeased and about to leave him, bids him state his grievances plainly. After a little feigned reluctance, Leporello, having wrung from his master a solemn promise not to get angry, tells him sundry unpalatable truths, which liberty Don Giovanni consents to overlook, provided his servant will now help him faithfully. Leporello immediately surmises that there is some new love-affair on hand, and asks the lady's name, so he may add it to a list he keeps of his master's sweethearts. Don Giovanni launches into an enthusiastic description of a beautiful lady, whom he means to convey to his castle that very night. But before he can finish his confidences, he is distracted by the appearance of a veiled woman, who he conjectures must be handsome, and who therefore absorbs his ever fickle attention.

While he observes her from a slight distance, she, unconscious of his presence, comes forward, bitterly complaining of her faithless lover. She

cannot banish him from her heart, in spite of his cruel neglect, but sighs for revenge. As Don Giovanni delights in playing the part of consoler, he steps forward, after exchanging a few subdued remarks with his servant. He is about to offer her his services, when she suddenly turns toward him, and he sees that the stranger is Donna Elvira, a lady whom he has loved and deserted. Recognising him at the same moment, she overwhelms him with vehement reproaches. Seeing she will not listen to his attempts at pacification, he calls Leporello, and cleverly effects his escape, leaving his servant with her to supply the explanation she has just demanded.

The embarrassed Leporello gives expression to a few indisputable axioms, by way of gaining time; and when Elvira angrily turns away, she discovers that Don Giovanni has taken advantage of her momentary distraction to disappear. Then Leporello urges her not to waste another regret upon her lost lover, philosophically assuring her she is neither the first nor the last Don Giovanni has betrayed. He gives her an elaborate catalogue of the ladies his master has wooed in every country, village, and town, and assures her that petticoats have an irresistible fascination for such a man. Donna Elvira, who has listened with increasing dismay to the account of Don

Giovanni's conquests and wiles, cries out in despair that since such is the case her love for him is dead, and that hate, rage, and contempt are the only passions she now feels.

The next scene is played in front of Don Giovanni's palace, where peasants have assembled to witness the marriage of Zerlina. She is a pretty maiden, and assures her companions that youth is the time for love, and that it behooves them to waste no time in mating, — a sentiment which the chorus gladly echoes. Her bridegroom, Masetto, gives similar advice to the men; and as all feel happy, they prepare to dance. Just then, however, Don Giovanni comes upon the scene with Leporello. His ever-roving eye is caught by the fresh charms of the peasant bride; and Leporello thinks that among so many pretty girls his master may surely spare one or two to him. The gallant Don Giovanni, in the mean time, has addressed Zerlina, and having discovered that she is the bride, proposes that the company adjourn to his castle, where music and refreshments will be supplied. In spite of Masetto's bewildered protest, he offers his arm to Zerlina, and leads her into his house, leaving Masetto to follow with Leporello and the remainder of the guests. Zerlina, ignorant of the character of her handsome escort, does not suspect his motive

when he begins to decry her bridegroom and to praise her; and when he assures her he would fain make her his bride, she at first refuses to listen to him. His pleading is, however, about to win her consent, when Donna Elvira suddenly comes forward, determined to save the innocent girl from the wiles of a man whose wickedness she knows only too well. But Don Giovanni addresses her with great tenderness, assuring Zerlina in an aside that the unfortunate lady is insane, and that he is obliged to feign passion for her, so as to prevent her injuring herself in a fit of lunacy. Donna Elvira is, however, so persistent that she accompanies Zerlina into the castle.

Left alone, Don Giovanni curses his ill luck, and is in no wise reassured when he perceives Donna Anna and her lover, Don Octavio, drawing near. The girl is still mourning her dead father and longing for revenge, which Don Octavio assures her will be hers as soon as he can discover her cowardly assailant. He little suspects that Don Giovanni is the man he seeks, and Donna Anna is just bespeaking the latter's aid when the jealous Donna Elvira again appears. Her object is to prevent Don Giovanni's having any intercourse with pretty young ladies, so she denounces him as a villain.

Her language is so violent, that Don Giovanni

has no trouble in persuading Donna Anna and her lover that the lady is insane, and she leaves in anger, vowing she will seek redress for her wrongs by making them public. Under pretext of guarding her from harm, Don Giovanni hastens after her. Donna Anna now reveals to Don Octavio that while Donna Elvira was speaking with Don Giovanni, she suddenly recognised in the latter, the voice and gesture of the wretch who forced his way into her apartment and killed her beloved father. This discovery amazes Don Octavio, and makes him so angry, that he does not require any urging to take steps for an immediate revenge.

When they have gone, Leporello enters again, swearing he can no longer serve Don Giovanni. But when his master appears, he gruffly reports that he has obeyed orders and brought all the peasants into the house. There, in spite of all his lies and the abundant refreshments, Masetto still looks unhappy and suspicious. Zerlina, too, seems ill at ease, for Donna Elvira has told her a great deal of harm about Don Giovanni. She would doubtless have talked her over entirely, had not Leporello cleverly beguiled the irate lady out of the room and into the garden, locking the door so she could not return.

Don Giovanni is so pleased by this report

that he praises Leporello, and bids him set all the peasants dancing so he can secure Zerlina for a partner. He wishes to undo all the harm that Donna Elvira has done, and, if possible, add another to the famous list of conquests.

The next scene opens in the garden of the castle, where Zerlina is trying to win the sullen Masetto back to good temper. Obdurate at first, he finally yields to her coaxing, and the reconciliation is nearly complete when Don Giovanni's voice is heard giving orders. As Zerlina expresses a desire to get away, Masetto's suspicions are once more aroused, and bidding her remain where she is, he hides just as Don Giovanni appears. The master of the house, with feigned cordiality, sends the peasants who surround him to the dancing and refreshment halls, and then, approaching Zerlina, tries to make love to her.

He has scarcely begun when, perceiving her embarrassment, he looks carelessly around him. Seeing Masetto, he addresses him with the greatest ease, and invites him to come with them both into the dancing-room. The sullen peasant follows; and when they have gone, Donna Elvira ushers in Donna Anna and Don Octavio, assuring them that they can easily mingle among the guests unrecognised, as they wear dominoes.

They are, however, soon noticed by Leporello, who points them out to Don Giovanni. The latter, in his character of host, bids them a courteous welcome, and invites them to join in the festivities. They gladly accept, hoping it will give them the desired opportunity to outwit Don Giovanni's wicked plans.

They keep such a keen watch upon their host, that they are quick to perceive how he whisks his fair partner, Zerlina, into a neighbouring empty room as they whirl around in the dance. Leporello, in the mean time, is trying to engross Masetto's attention, and the music is playing so loud that none of the other dancers hear Zerlina's scream as the door closes between her and the dancers.

The three masks, however, spring forward; and Leporello, seeing the trick bids fair to cause a disturbance, lets Masetto go, and creeps under a table so as to be safe. The door is now broken open, and Zerlina rushes out, closely followed by Don Giovanni, who, perceiving the hiding Leporello, hotly accuses him of being the cause of all the disturbance.

This bold attempt to shield himself by accusing another is frustrated by the three strangers, who, unmasking, join Masetto and Zerlina in denouncing him as a villain of the deepest and

darkest dye; and nature seems to second this accusation, for threatening peals of thunder are heard. In spite of all they can say, however, Don Giovanni does not quail beneath their denunciations, and Leporello cannot but admire the impudence which now stands his master in good stead.

The second act opens on the same square as the first. Master and servant are again face to face, hotly disputing because Leporello has seen fit to give notice. Don Giovanni tries to induce his man to remain by promising him plenty of money, if he will only help him to carry out his latest scheme. Leporello finally consents to second his master in everything except love-affairs. But when Don Giovanni demonstrates that he cannot live without the excitement of some secret passion, the servant again promises his aid.

Don Giovanni now explains that he has fallen in love with Donna Elvira's maid, and he makes his servant change garments with him, so that they may be mistaken one for the other. Then, going beneath Donna Elvira's window, they overhear her confessing that she cannot forget her love for Don Giovanni. The latter determines to take advantage of his position and disguise to get rid of her. Feigning remorse and deep passion, he

disarms her anger, and implores her to come down and join him in the court. When she has finally consented, he suddenly turns to Leporello, who has been the amused spectator of this little scene. He peremptorily bids him run and meet Elvira, and, favoured by his disguise, lure her away, so as to leave his master a clear field to woo the pretty chambermaid.

Before Leporello can offer more than a feeble protest, the door opens and Donna Elvira appears. Urged forward by a vigorous push from Don Giovanni's muscular arm, the astonished Leporello suddenly finds himself almost flung into Donna Elvira's embrace. Encouraged by her tender appeals and caresses, he begins to take pleasure in the game, and answers her so warmly that Don Giovanni, angry at his impudence, utters a dark threat which puts them both to flight. As soon as they have gone, our hero begins the serenade which is to touch the heart of the pretty chambermaid. But he has barely ended the first verse, when Masetto enters with a band of armed peasants. He has come thither, determined to find and punish the villain who tried to rob him of his Zerlina. Don Giovanni perceives this intent, and, feeling sure not to be recognised in his disguise, steps forward. He pretends deep anger against the

master of the castle, and offers his help. It is gladly accepted, and by his directions the peasants scatter. When left alone with Masetto, Don Giovanni artfully secures possession of his gun, and with the butt-end suddenly administers a sound thrashing upon him before making his escape. The loud cries of the wounded Masetto bring the devoted Zerlina to his rescue. As soon as she has ascertained that no bones are broken, she tenderly comforts him, and leads him away, bidding him feel her sympathy by laying his hand upon her fast-beating heart.

The next scene is played in an inner court of the castle, where Donna Elvira, still unsuspicious, is busily talking to Leporello. She openly wonders why he so carefully avoids the light, and suddenly shrinks back when he sees approaching torches. Leporello, in an aside, cogitates how he can effect his escape before the fraud is discovered. He nervously feels along the wall for a door by which he can run away. He has just managed to conceal himself, when Donna Anna and her lover come upon the scene, he, as usual, comforting her for the loss of her beloved father. Donna Elvira is, in the mean time, distractedly seeking her vanished companion, who is about to slip away, when he finds himself confronted by Zerlina and Masetto. They, joining

the others, surround him, and are on the point of venting all their rage upon him, when they suddenly discover that he is not Don Giovanni. Their stupefaction at this revelation holds them motionless, and the quick-witted Leporello takes advantage of it to escape. Donna Elvira and Masetto long to stop him, but Don Octavio bids them let him go, swearing that if they will only comfort his beloved, he will go in quest of Don Giovanni. He again promises to avenge Donna Anna's wrongs, for now he is quite sure that it was Don Giovanni who killed her father.

The next scene is played in a walled-in cemetery at night. The moonbeams fall upon the monuments and reveal that the most prominent among them is a statue of the Commander. Don Giovanni has come in here, to escape the pursuit of the angry relatives of a girl whom he treated with offensive familiarity when he met her on the street. He is idly wondering how his servant managed with Donna Elvira, when Leporello suddenly appears. The man has sought this quiet place, because he fears the wrath of Masetto. As soon as Don Giovanni perceives his ally, he eagerly begins telling him his last adventure. But his gay narrative is suddenly interrupted by a sepulchral voice, solemnly warning him that ere the morrow's dawn all laughter will be ended for him for ever.

Leporello, terrified, assures him that the voice belongs to some spectre, and the undaunted Don Giovanni boldly challenges the unseen listener to speak again. Then the same voice gravely bids him go away and leave the dead in peace. Wishing to get some amusement out of this situation, and perceiving his servant's evident terror, Don Giovanni now bids the latter go to the statue of the Commander and invite it to supper. Leporello obeys reluctantly, for the statue seems to him alive. But urged by his master, he tremblingly begins. His terror increases as the stony eyes turn upon him, and the statue slowly nods its head. As his trembling voice now refuses to serve him any further, Don Giovanni steps forward and delivers his own invitation, which the statue solemnly accepts. Amazed and slightly awed, Don Giovanni leaves the cemetery to return home and prepare a feast for his guest.

In the next scene, Don Octavio persuades Donna Anna that as soon as the crimes of Don Giovanni have been punished and her wrongs avenged, she must reward his constancy by marrying him, a promise which she finally consents to give.

Then a sudden change shows the dining-hall in Don Giovanni's castle. The table is spread

with exquisite viands; and, while the master openly satisfies his hunger and thirst, Leporello surreptitiously indulges in eating and drinking. until caught in the very act by his keen-eyed master. Into this hall comes Donna Elvira. She, foreseeing the doom which awaits Don Giovanni if he does not repent, kneels at his feet, imploring him to renounce his dissolute life. But he mocks her, and ends by drinking a blasphemous toast which drives her from the room. As she passes out, she utters a shriek of such awful terror that Don Giovanni is surprised. Leporello, going out to see what it means, comes back shaking with fright and stammering something about a statue.

A loud and repeated knocking at the door increases his terror to such a pitch, that, instead of opening, as his master bids him, he creeps under the table and hides there. Compelled to open the door himself, Don Giovanni finds himself face to face with the statue of the Commander, which stalks solemnly in, saying it has come to supper.

Even then Don Giovanni's magnificent impudence does not desert him, and he bids Leporello bring supper for his guest. But the Commander declares earthly food is unpalatable to those who have tasted of celestial fare, and

he adds that he has come here merely to invite his host in his turn. Don Giovanni, who has never shown the white feather yet, accepts the invitation after a slight hesitation. He ratifies it by placing his hand in that of the statue, whose cold touch sends a chill to his very heart. Thrice the Commander now summous him to abjure his evil ways and repent, but thrice Don Giovanni refuses. The statue solemnly departs, assuring him it is now too late, and a posse of demons rush into the room. They take forcible possession of Don Giovanni, drag him down to the place of infernal torment to receive due punishment for all his crimes, while singing that such is the doom of all malefactors.

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE.

THE Italian composer, Rossini, who has been called the "Swan of Pesaro," wrote forty operas during the first thirty-seven years of his life. Of very humble parentage, he owed his education largely to his own efforts, and began to write scores at fifteen. Many of his early productions, now almost unknown, were very well received in Italy, where they were frequently represented. In 1816, Rossini, in search of material for a new work, begged permission of Paisiello to make use of Beaumarchais' "Barber of Seville," a subject which the veteran composer had already set to music about thirty-five years before.

The libretto for the new opera was written by Sterbini, who, living at that time in the same house as Rossini, wrote words to the tunes which the composer hummed to him. They laboured so diligently and harmoniously, that at the end of thirteen days the whole opera was written. During that time neither of them took any long rest, or ventured out for exercise, lest

ROSSINI.

their attention should be distracted from the work on hand.

The opera was mounted within a month, and played in Rome before an audience, who, not knowing that Rossini had obtained Paisiello's consent to adapt Beaumarchais' play, were determined to find fault with the opera in advance. A series of ludicrous mishaps helped to make Rossini's work a failure on its first appearance, for the tenor, Garcia, having insisted upon accompanying himself in the serenade, broke one of the strings of his guitar and could not proceed until it had been replaced. Then Don Basilio fell over a trap-door, while coming on the stage, and had to sing "Calumnia" with his handkerchief to his nose. Lastly, in the midst of a splendid finale, a cat walked out upon the stage, got in the actors' way, was chased hither and thither, and created a commotion which caused great amusement among the audience.

The only applause given at the end of the first act was by Rossini himself, and this so angered the public that they drove him out of the theatre by their loud hisses. He went home, and when his friends hastened thither at the end of the performance to offer their condolences, they found him fast asleep. On the next night Rossini pretended illness so as not to be

obliged to appear at the theatre, but this time the work was so well received that he was serenaded, and received quite an ovation at his own house after the play was over. Since then the "Barber of Seville," or "Il Barbiere di Seviglia," as it is called in Italian, has never failed to win great applause, and has been given in all parts of the world by the best opera-troupes.

The opening scene of this opera is played in one of the streets of Seville at early dawn. The Count of Almaviva has come thither with his servant, Fiorillo, and a band of hired musicians, to serenade the young lady with whom he is in love. Fiorillo marshals the musicians to their places, cautioning them to make no noise, — an admonition which they repeat to each other. When all are ready the count himself comes forward, and accompanied by these musicians, serenades the girl he loves, imploring her to come out on her balcony and smile upon him. But there are no signs of a fair face at the window; and as Fiorillo assures him that their efforts are vain, the count gives him money, bidding him reward and dismiss the musicians. They are so effusive in their thanks, that the count sends them away impatiently, and tells them they are rousing the whole neighbourhood with their noise.

When they have gone, the count tells his servant to withdraw, saying he is determined to wait there, in the street, until he obtains a glimpse of his beloved, who hitherto has never yet failed to come out upon her balcony every morning. While Fiorillo retires to await further orders, Figaro suddenly appears with his guitar, merrily trolling his famous aria, "Largo al factotum," in which he describes his busy life as barber, surgeon, and jack-of-all-trades in the city. He boasts of his skill, says his services are ever in demand, and his pockets never empty, for he dresses the ladies' hair by day, and serenades them by night in behalf of their gallants. Suddenly he becomes aware of the count's presence, and the latter, recognising him, steps out of his hiding-place. He button-holes the city factotum, bespeaks his aid, and tells him he has fallen desperately in love with a most charming young lady, the daughter of a doctor. He has followed her thither, and is now wooing her under the name of Lindor. Figaro, gazing at the house he designates as the dwelling of his charmer, now informs him that the young lady is not the daughter, but the ward of the old doctor, and that he knows all about the people, as he is barber, hair-dresser, surgeon, and major-domo to the household.

Just then, the sound of an opening window

drives them to a shelter under the portico, whence they perceive Rosina step out upon her balcony and look anxiously up and down the street, seeking her admirer, to whom she wishes to throw the letter she holds. The count's eyes rest with rapture upon her; but, before he can speak to her, her guardian, Dr. Bartolo, steps out on the balcony and asks what letter she is holding. She carelessly answers that it is a copy of the song, "A Useless Precaution," and, as if by accident, lets it fall down into the street. While the aged Bartolo is hastening downstairs to pick it up, Rosina quickly signals to the count to take possession of the missive. He has barely regained his retreat, when Bartolo comes out, and seeks for the fallen paper in vain. Rosina pretends to help her guardian by giving him directions until, his suspicions roused, he angrily orders her to go back into the house and close the window. When Dr. Bartolo has re-entered, the count reads the letter, wherein Rosina tells him that her guardian is soon going out. She further directs him to find some way of letting her know his name and intentions, as she is tired of Bartolo's tyranny, and longs to find some means of escape.

The count swears she shall soon be free, but while he is trying to devise some plan with

Figaro, the house door opens, and Bartolo steps out, telling some one within not to admit any visitor except Don Basilio, with whom he wishes to conclude the necessary arrangements for his immediate marriage with Rosina. These orders given, he goes away, and the count discovers from Figaro that Don Basilio is a noted intriguer, the music-master of Rosina, a man who is ready to do anything for a bribe. Then the count promises Figaro a rich reward if he will only find some way to introduce him into Don Bartolo's house. Figaro swears that with such a prospect in view, his brain will prove marvellously inventive.

Their duet over, the barber bids the count disguise himself as a soldier, come to Don Bartolo's house with a forged billet, and quarter himself there willy-nilly, pretending to be tipsy, so that none of his doings may seem suspicious. After some demur, the count perceives the ingenuity of the plan. Then he ascertains the whereabouts of Figaro's shop, and they part, after warmly praising the charms of love and of gold in a light and lively duet.

The next scene is played in Bartolo's house, where Rosina — having discovered that her lover's name is Lindor — vows that she will return his love and marry him in spite of all objec-

tions. She adds that while she would be gentle and obedient to any one who showed her kindness, she cannot but try to outwit a guardian who has proved such a suspicious tyrant. Then she wonders how she can forward a letter she has just written, and, remembering that she saw Figaro in close confabulation with her lover, resolves to intrust it to him.

At this juncture Figaro comes in, and after a few preliminaries, Rosina is about to make her request, when she hears her guardian coming. Both she and the barber dread his approach, and, not wishing to be seen talking together, they go out separately, after a hasty remark from each that they will meet again to talk over more important matters.

Dr. Bartolo, whose approaching step has put them to flight, now comes in with Don Basilio, explaining to the latter that he means to marry Rosina on the morrow, be she willing or not. Don Basilio answers that he has just come to discuss the self-same business, and to warn his friend that Count Almaviva, Rosina's unknown lover, is now in town. This news fills Don Bartolo's heart with dismay, but Don Basilio tells him it will be easy to invent some calumny which will spoil all the count's chances with the fair Rosina. As Bartolo expresses some dread lest calumny

might have unpleasant legal consequences, Don Basilio, in a wonderful aria, explains how from a mere whisper, slander spreads and gains strength, until it becomes as powerful as a torrent, and sweeps all before it, leaving nothing but ruin in its wake.

When both have left the apartment to draw up the marriage contract, Figaro comes upon the scene, saying it will be easy to outwit them now that he has overheard all their plans. He is just wondering how he can get speech with Rosina, when she returns, asking what he wished to say when they were interrupted. After oracularly announcing that she will soon be able to eat wedding cake, Figaro tells her that her guardian proposes to marry her to-morrow. She indignantly declares he is greatly mistaken, and asks the name of the gentleman to whom he was speaking under her window that morning? She plies Figaro with questions until he gradually tells her that it was his nephew, who is deeply in love with a fair girl named Rosina. This news fills Rosina's heart with joy; she archly tells Figaro that she knew the young man loved her, although she had never been able to speak to him, and he greatly admires her keen perceptions. He then assures her that she shall soon be able to speak to

Lindor, and in the mean time, urges her to write a little note, which he promises to deliver promptly. She at first pretends to be reluctant to do so, but after some coaxing, draws from her bosom the already prepared letter, which she hands over to the amazed Figaro. Then he leaves her, shaking his head over the wiles of women, who can deceive even such sly old foxes as he.

Left alone, Rosina rejoices over her happy prospects, but soon Dr. Bartolo joins her, asking what Figaro wanted. She has no excuse ready, and stammers and contradicts herself until her guardian's suspicions are awakened. He suddenly inquires whether the barber brought her an answer to the note she dropped this morning, and which she tried to make him believe was only the words of a song? She denies having received or written any letter; but he convicts her of falsehood by pointing to her ink-stained finger, to the table where there are now only five sheets of paper instead of the six he laid there that morning, and to the pen, which has evidently been used.

Rosina tries to persuade him that she used the ink as a cure for a bruise, took the paper to wrap up some candy to send to Figaro's little daughter, and traced a flower on her embroidery with the pen. But Dr. Bartolo refuses to

believe these explanations, and says he will have her closely watched by his servants until the marriage knot is firmly tied. In the mean time he escorts her to her room, where he advises her to remain until he gives her leave to come out.

When they have left the stage, the servant Martha comes into the room, pitying the unfortunate girl, whom she fears her guardian's unmerited severity will drive to some very rash deed. She is interrupted by loud knocking, and goes out when the count, dressed as a soldier and pretending to be tipsy, stalks into the room, noisily calling for the master of the house. Bartolo comes in, and is disagreeably surprised at the aspect of his visitor, who, in answer to his questions, blunderingly states that he has been quartered upon Dr. Balordo — Bertholdo — Barbaro. He ends by embracing Dr. Bartolo by force, under pretext that, as he is surgeon of the regiment, they are colleagues. While the disgusted Dr. Bartolo is examining his billet, Rosina comes into the room, wondering who the soldier may be. After a little manœuvring, the count manages to whisper that he is Lindor. Bartolo, looking up, now becomes aware of his ward's presence, and orders her to go back to her room. She says she is going, and when the tipsy soldier offers to escort her,

and takes advantage of his supposed condition to fling one arm around her, Bartolo gets very angry indeed. The lovers now try to distract the old man's attention while a note passes from the count's possession into that of Rosina, but he is so watchful that their first attempt does not succeed. Then, hoping to get rid of the intruder, Bartolo goes to his desk to search for a paper which shows he is exempt from lodging troops. Once more the count tries to convey the note to Rosina ; but again the doctor baffles him by suddenly coming to show him the document in question. The count dashes it from his hand, saying he is determined not to move, and when Bartolo threatens him, he gaily offers to fight. During the next few minutes, he manages not only to hold Dr. Bartolo's attention, but also to convey the note to Rosina, pretending she has dropped it with her handkerchief. The old man insists, however, upon seeing it ; and she, having effected a clever substitution, lets him finally snatch from her hand a wash-list. He cannot understand it, but she pretends to be greatly offended at the treatment he makes her undergo. She is duly pitied by the count, and by Bertha, who enters to announce that the barber has come.

Figaro himself now appears, imploring them

not to make such a noise, if they would not alarm the whole city, and, in a hasty aside, warning the count to be more prudent. As soon as Bartolo sees the new-comer, he begins to accuse the soldier of disorderly conduct, and calls him names which the count returns with interest. The quarrel reaches such a pitch, that the police are heard without, demanding admittance. Then the officer asks the cause of the uproar. Accusation and counter accusation now follow each other with bewildering rapidity; and Rosina, seeing matters are going badly with the soldier, now suggests that the poor man, being tipsy, cannot be held accountable for his actions. The soldiers, nevertheless, surround him, and they are about to lead him away, when the count secretly shows the officer the order of the Grandees of Spain, which he wears under his coat, and whispers to him his real name. The officer, therefore, makes a sign to his soldiers, and he leaves the apartment with them without proceeding any further.

The count, Rosina, and Bartolo express their respective feelings in a trio; and when Bartolo tries to demand an explanation, or to object, all present unite in silencing him, until he is driven almost distracted, and the curtain falls upon his complete mystification and discomfiture.

The next act begins by a soliloquy held by Bartolo in his own house. He says that, having vainly tried to get some information about the drunken soldier, he feels persuaded that the latter must have been a spy, sent thither by the Count of Almaviva, and he uneasily comments upon the fact that a man is not safe even in his own house. He is interrupted by loud knocking, and calls to his servants to open the door. The count, disguised as a music-master, soon comes into the room, addressing him with great solemnity. Bartolo returns the greeting in a surly way, closely scanning the intruder, whose face seems strangely familiar. And while he wonders in an aside who it may be, the count, in the same manner, expresses the hopes that his disguise may not be detected.

When asked to state his errand, the count gravely says he has been sent to give the young lady her lesson, because Don Basilio is ill and cannot come in person. As Dr. Bartolo seems inclined to hasten off to see what is the matter with Don Basilio, the count assures him it is nothing serious, and detains him by explaining that Count Almaviva came that very morning to the inn where he was staying, and accidentally dropped a note directed by Dr. Bartolo's ward. The doctor eagerly snatches the note which the

music-master offers, and the latter goes on to explain that, knowing how anxious Dr. Bartolo is to prevent any intercourse between his ward and the count, he has a plan to propose. Then he suggests that Dr. Bartolo should let him talk to the young lady, while giving her a music lesson, promising to convince her that the count is deceiving her.

This plan so delights Dr. Bartolo that he puts the letter in his pocket and goes to get his ward, while the count congratulates himself upon the stratagem which has enabled him to have an interview with Rosina.

Dr. Bartolo soon returns with Rosina, who, recognising her lover in spite of his disguise, cannot restrain an exclamation. She, however, hastens to ascribe it to a wrench she has given her foot. Invited to sing, she selects a song which the count pronounces charming, but which Dr. Bartolo declares is far inferior to the music sung in his day, of which he immediately proceeds to give them a ludicrous example.

He is interrupted by Figaro, who has come to shave him, and who insists upon doing so immediately. Divided between the desire to keep close watch over his ward, and the fear of losing sight of his keys, Bartolo hesitates whether he shall go himself, or send Figaro, for

shaving materials. Figaro takes advantage of this indecision to ascertain from Rosina which key on the bunch opens the lattice window. He has no sooner done so than Bartolo decides that it is wiser not to lose sight of the young lady, and sends Figaro for towels and soap. During his brief absence, the barber cleverly gains possession of the key he wants, and creates a diversion in favour of the lovers by playing havoc among the crockery. Dr. Bartolo rushes out to ascertain the amount of damage done, but soon returns, loudly bewailing his loss. Figaro comes back with him, and, having signalled to the lovers the success of his undertaking, begins shaving his patron. He cleverly gets between Dr. Bartolo and the lovers, and all seems to be going on well when Don Basilio suddenly appears. Determined not to lose the game for want of a little audacity, the count starts forward, and after a rapid aside to Figaro, warmly remonstrates with Don Basilio upon his imprudence in venturing out when he looks so ill. The others, who have only been waiting for a clue, now join in assuring the poor man that he ought to be in bed, prevent his saying a single word, and urge him to go home. Even Dr. Bartolo says he looks ill, and orders him to bed, advice which Don Basilio accepts,

when the count has slipped some gold in his hand, and thus made him understand that it will be to his advantage to leave. The count and Rosina, in a beautiful duet, bid him good-night; and Bartolo, seating himself, bids Figaro proceed. The music lesson is resumed; and the barber, to prevent the doctor's perceiving all that is going on, pretends to have something in his eye, and makes Bartolo examine it.

The count seizes this opportunity to persuade Rosina to elope with him at midnight, promising to come for her. But before he can explain the use he has made of her letter, the suspicious doctor, drawing near, perceives there is more talk than music. He flies into such a rage, that Figaro and the count deem it better to depart, declaring Bartolo is exciting himself over a mere jest. When all have left the room, Bertha comes in, and remarks that there is nothing but quarrelling in this house, and that she is sure there never will be any peace as long as the old man tries to marry his ward.

In the next scene, Bartolo is in close conversation with Don Basilio. Discovering from him that he did not send the strange music-master, Bartolo suspects that it must have been the count. He therefore determines to hasten his marriage, and sends Basilio to get the notary,

so the contract may be signed. Basilio first objects that the notary will not come, as his services have already been bespoken for Figaro's niece; but, urged by Dr. Bartolo, he finally goes out to get him. During his absence, the doctor, taking the note the count had given him, shows it to Rosina, whom he summons from her room. She is amazed when she sees it; and when her guardian tells her that her lover is unworthy of her, and that he and Figaro are conspiring to give her to the Count of Almaviva, she is in despair, for she does not suspect that the count and Lindor are the same.

This supposed discovery of Lindor's treachery makes her so indignant, that she reveals to her guardian that he is coming at midnight to get her, and that he will force his way into the house by means of the lattice to which Figaro has the key. Dr. Bartolo works her up to such a pitch of indignation, that she promises to marry him as soon as the notary comes. He implores her to lock herself up in her room, while he goes in search of the police, to arrest Figaro and Lindor as common thieves when they enter the house.

He has miscalculated the time, however, for he has no sooner gone than Figaro and the count scramble into the room, where they strike

a light. The count then looks eagerly around for Rosina, who, wishing to give her treacherous lover a piece of her mind, steals out of her room instead of remaining in seclusion as her guardian bade her. The count cannot at first understand why she repulses him; but when she accuses him of wishing to sell her to the count, he tells her who he really is. A most charming love-scene is now witnessed by Figaro, but he soon interrupts it, urging them both to depart. They are about to leave by the window, when Figaro says he sees two persons at the door. The three now caution each other to make no noise; and finding the street clear once more, they are about to escape when they perceive that the ladder is gone!

In the midst of their consternation, Don Basilio comes in with the notary and marriage contracts. The quick-witted Figaro immediately suggests that the contract for his niece's marriage, which was to have been signed in his house, should be completed here. Don Basilio offers some slight objections, which are, however, silenced by the count's present of a beautiful ring. The contract has barely been signed and witnessed when Dr. Bartolo returns with the police, who have come to arrest the count and Figaro. The police question the supposed

thieves, and when Dr. Bartolo finally understands that his ward is irrevocably bound to the Count of Almaviva, he concludes it will be best to give the newly married couple his blessing. The reconciliation being complete, love reigns supreme, and the curtain falls, amid general rejoicings and hearty good wishes.

THE VIENNA OPERA HOUSE.

MARTHA.

THE German composer Flotow was educated to be a diplomat, but when he went to Paris, as a very young man, and found himself suddenly thrown in the midst of a brilliant artistic circle, he suddenly became conscious of a latent talent for musical composition, and thenceforth devoted himself to a serious course of study. His first work, "Stradella," was very coldly received, until he remodelled it into an opera seven years later, when it was produced in Hamburg. Since then it has been very popular in Germany, but it failed to please English audiences when given at Covent Garden in 1864. Of Flotow's fifteen operas, the best known and most charming is "Martha." It first appeared as a ballet, called "Lady Henrietta," and was rewritten as an opera three years after. The libretto is mainly the work of St. Georges, and the piquant situations, added to the light and attractive music, where the well-known air of "The Last Rose of Summer" appears in several forms, have combined to

form a work which is more admired by the general public than by thorough musicians. The melody of the work is so flowing, and the tunes so numerous and lively, that they have been played and whistled and sung everywhere.

As the curtain rises upon this opera, we behold Lady Harriet in her richly furnished boudoir, languidly allowing her maid Nancy to put the finishing touches to her toilet, while other ladies, grouped in the background, await her orders. All wonder at their noble mistress' languor and sadness, call her attention to the numerous tokens of the devotion of a host of friends and lovers, and point out the flowers sent by her cousin Tristan. But she disdainfully pushes aside flowers and diamonds, and pettishly begs her attendants to go away and leave her a prey to the melancholy which oppresses her, and for which she cannot account. Nancy suggests that depression is a symptom of love, but Lady Harriet declares she is tired to death of all her suitors, — a state of affairs which fills the listeners with dismay. They say that unless love steps in, and puts an end to this apathy, they fear their lady will die of sheer *ennui*. At this point, a servant solemnly announces Sir Tristan, who, being admitted, proceeds, with sundry interruptions, to inquire

after Lady Harriet's welfare, and to propose a long list of diversions for the coming day. But none of his plans find favour in the lady's sight, and while Nancy and the other attendants scorn Sir Tristan for not being able to devise something to please her, he fatuously congratulates himself upon his success at providing entertainment. To show her power over this infatuated nobleman, Lady Harriet now bids him perform sundry menial services, and when he has opened the window at her behest, the sound of a merry chorus falls upon their ears. Lady Harriet, roused from her indifference, inquires what these merry tones may mean, and Nancy informs her that a group of country girls are on their way to the Richmond Fair, whither farmers and their wives betake themselves to hire servants for the coming year. The spirited singing of the peasant girls rouses Lady Harriet from her indifference, and while her attendants seem to consider the tune vulgar, the fine lady pronounces it charming, and declares she would like to witness such a rural scene, and to wander amongst the people unknown. This proposal greatly shocks Sir Tristan, but his objections only serve to strengthen Lady Harriet in her determination. She therefore announces that she and Nancy will go to the fair with Sir

Tristan in peasant costumes, to take part in all the fun. So that Sir Tristan may acquit himself creditably as their partner in the country dances, Lady Harriet and Nancy now teach him the steps, and force him to caper around the room, until he is exhausted and pleads for a chance to rest. They finally yield to his entreaties, and the curtain falls as they leave to assume their disguise.

The next scene represents the market place at Richmond, with its numerous booths, and a crowd of country people good-naturedly jostling one another as they pass to and fro. The farmers are anxious to settle their business and go home, for the day is nearly over, so they and their wives loudly call for industrious servant maids, whose diligence will be duly rewarded. As they call, the girls come crowding upon the scene, still singing the merry chorus which so charmed Lady Harriet; but they urge that they must rest a while, as they have come from far, and have taken an active part in the day's diversions. The farmers and their wives speak to them kindly, trying in the mean time to make a selection among them, for a bargain concluded at the Richmond Fair is binding upon both parties for a whole year. The servants and farmers having gone away in

quest of refreshments, two young men appear, whip in hand. They, too, are in quest of servants, for since the death of their mother, a capable housewife, their farm has been sadly neglected. The sturdier of the two adds that the deceased was a good woman, and that she made no difference between them, except to show most indulgence for Lionel, her foster son, the more delicate of the two. Then Lionel says he well remembers how kindly Plunket's parents took him in, when they found him on the doorstep with his dying father. The latter had no time to reveal his name or station, but he left them a ring, telling them to show it to the queen, should his son ever be in sore need of help. A life spent in the hospitable farmhouse has made the place seem like home to Lionel, and he and Plunket are so attached to each other, that they are determined to share good and bad fortune, whichever befalls them.

All at once, their conversation is interrupted by the loud ringing of a bell, and farmers and servant girls come thronging upon the scene, announcing the arrival of the sheriff, for whom they now make way. He pompously reads the laws regulating the fair, and warns all parties that when earnest money has been given and taken, the contract is binding for a year. This is no

news for the bystanders, so the sheriff, calling up the girls one by one, asks what they can do, and offers them to the farmers at wages which vary according to their skill. Many bargains are made, but soon the servants begin crying out all together their special avocations. Some of them express a desire to find employment in the house of a widower, and artfully set forth their proficiency in caring for motherless children. Their volubility almost drives the sheriff crazy, but they pay no heed to his remonstrances, and the clamour continues until most of the girls have found employment, received their earnest money, and gone away in company with their new masters and mistresses.

When all have left, Lady Harriet, Sir Tristan, and Nancy come forward, in their peasant costumes, the lady pulling her reluctant escort, and bidding him not look so glum, when he has just been seeing such novel sights. Just then, Plunket and Lionel, who have not yet secured any servants, reappear upon the scene, and are immediately struck by the looks of the two girls, whom they are, however, too timid to address. Tristan, seeing their admiring glances, would fain draw Lady Harriet and Nancy away; but they, wishing to keep up the farce a little longer, refuse to go with him.

Perceiving this, Lionel and Plunket gain courage to address Tristan, and tell him that there are plenty more servants to be had. They call aloud for maids, and when a bevy of the girls come upon the stage, they point out Tristan as a would-be employer. Surrounded by a noisy troop of servant girls, all loudly proclaiming what they can do, the bewildered Tristan runs away, closely followed by his persecutors, and leaving Lady Harriet and Nancy alone with Lionel and Plunket. After a little more hesitation, seeing the girls will go away if he does not speak, Plunket finally steps forward, says their appearance pleases him, and adds that if they are capable and thrifty, they may spend many years together. The ladies are so tickled by this address that they burst into loud laughter; but when Plunket begins scolding, Lionel interferes, saying they will work all the better if they are merry. The word "work," used in connection with them, affords more amusement; but when Plunket begins to state what labours they must perform, Lionel suggests that as they appear of delicate build, they should serve as house servants only. Plunket agrees to this, promises them fifty crowns a year, half a pint of ale on Sundays, and plum-pudding on New Year's day, — inducements which entertain the ladies

intensely ; and when the young men offer them earnest money, they both accept it, little suspecting the import of the transaction.

A little later, when they would fain take their leave, the young men firmly insist upon their keeping their bargain. Sir Tristan, coming back, still accompanied by his persecutors, now gets rid of them by flinging his purse to them. He tries to convey his charges away ; but Plunket and Lionel, backed by the sheriff and spectators, assure him that the two girls are obliged to follow their new masters. Tristan dares not interfere any further, lest Lady Harriet's name be discovered and her escapade become a source of mockery at court. Somewhat dismayed, the two girls take their places in a farm waggon, and drive away with their new masters, while the curtain falls upon the lively scene, where bargaining is still going on.

The next scene is played in the hall of the old farmhouse, whither Lionel and Plunket have brought their new maids, and where they bid them welcome. The girls enter hesitatingly, and look scornfully upon the homely surroundings, while their masters simultaneously begin to issue their orders. But when told they must rise at daybreak, both girls strongly object. Hoping to overcome their evident lazy

habits, the young men hold forth inducements of future rewards, which, however, are not as potent as they expect.

Plunket next points out their room, but when they make a move to retire, he bids them first prepare supper. The ladies are so horrified at such a proposal, that Lionel, wishing to shield Lady Harriet, with whom he has fallen in love at first sight, suggests that they are too tired to work to-night. But Plunket, whose equally susceptible heart has been touched by Nancy's attractions, is made of sterner stuff, so he begins questioning the maids. After some hesitation (which seems incomprehensible to him) they tell him their names are Martha and Julia, but when he bids Nancy take his hat and coat she answers him saucily. Hoping to win by gentleness, Lionel now politely requests Martha to take his wraps, but she too turns her back upon him. The young men are amazed at this unseemly behaviour, to the secret delight of their new maids. But, soon, hearing Plunket's stern tones ordering them to get their spinning-wheels and show what they can do, they dare not disobey. When the wheels are ready, and they are seated before them, it becomes very evident that they do not even know how to spin. They look so appealingly at the young men at this

juncture, and express such readiness to learn, that Lionel and Plunket seat themselves at the wheels and proceed to give them a spinning lesson. While they spin and explain, the ladies watch and exclaim, and this quartet is rightly considered one of the prettiest numbers of the whole opera.

As they progress, the young men cast more and more admiring glances at the maidens, until Nancy, growing frightened, tips her wheel over and runs away, Plunket closely pursuing her. Lady Harriet, or Martha, as Lionel calls her, is frightened to find herself alone with her young master; but he reassures her first, and then gradually proceeds to confess his ardent love for her, and to ask her to be his wife. The fair lady is secretly touched by this devotion, but she openly professes to pay no heed to it, and says it is a pity she cannot requite his kindness by proving a good servant, but that she does not know how to work. Lionel tells her she need do nothing but sing, so after some persuasion she completes his subjection by singing "The Last Rose of Summer." His wooing grows more passionate, but it seems to make no impression upon her, although, in an aside, she confesses that she feels herself gradually yielding, and that it behooves her to steel her heart against his pleading.

Fortunately for her, Nancy now comes back, still pursued by Plunket, who, although she has broken much crockery in the kitchen, and has threatened to scratch him if he comes near her, cannot help admiring her spirit. Noticing the embarrassment of Martha and Lionel, and winning no answer to his questions, Plunket concludes it is time to go to bed, just as the clock solemnly strikes the midnight hour. After protracted good-nights, the two maids retire to their chamber, while Plunket and Lionel leave the hall, locking the door behind them. They are no sooner gone than Lady Harriet and her maid come back into the hall, and while they are wondering how they can escape, they are startled first by strange sounds, and then by the appearance of Sir Tristan, who comes in through the window to rescue them. He looks around him contemptuously, and, warned to speak softly, tells them he has a carriage waiting outside to convey them to scenes more befitting their rank. After a farewell trio, they all depart through the window, just as Plunket comes into the hall, rubbing his eyes as if only half awake, and muttering against the servants, who will not let him sleep in peace. The sight of the open window makes him first conjecture he has been robbed, but when Lionel joins him, and they

find the girls' room empty, they discover that their new servants have escaped. Loath to lose his money, and especially anxious to recover the girls whom he and his friend love, Plunket tugs the bell rope, and rouses all his dependants. They rush upon the scene, inquiring what the noise may mean; and when the young men have promised a reward for the recovery of the runaways, they sally forth to capture them, and the curtain falls.

The third act is played in front of an inn, near a large forest. Many farmers are assembled here, with Plunket, who praises the fine port they are drinking. They fully agree with him; but their drinking song is soon interrupted by the passage of the queen and her ladies, who have come here to hunt. While the men go to see them pass, Plunket steps into the inn to pay the reckoning. The merry hunting chorus now awakes the forest echoes, and when all have vanished, Nancy is left alone on the stage. She wonders whether she can really be in love at last, for she acknowledges that she takes no pleasure in a diversion which once afforded her great delight. While she is musing thus, the huntswomen sweep across the scene once more, and when they have gone, Plunket steps out of the inn. Nancy does not

notice him, but looks anxiously around for her mistress, who, ever since the Richmond Fair adventure, has been strangely absent-minded, and inclined to seek complete solitude. Suddenly becoming aware of the presence of a man, Nancy steps up to inquire if he has seen Lady Harriet, and it is only when her question is half-uttered, that she recognises Plunket. At the same moment he recognises her, and although she pretends she has never seen him, he holds her fast, until she calls the huntresses to her rescue as they again cross the scene. Surrounding the bold man, the huntswomen point their bright spears at him, and singing their merry song, pursue him until he leaves the scene, vowing they must form part of the Wild Huntsman's train. When they have gone, Lionel advances, dreamily singing "The Last Rose of Summer," an air he can no more forget than he can banish from his heart the fair image of the one who sang it. He now says he has been unhappy ever since she left him, and disconsolately throws himself down upon a grassy bank to rest.

Just then Lady Harriet strolls across the scene with Sir Tristan, whom she soon dismisses. Left, as she believes, alone, she confesses that she has sought the forest solitude to mourn for

lost happiness. Her voice rouses Lionel from his fit of abstraction, and recognising her, he rushes joyfully toward her. But she receives him coldly, pretends not to know him, and when he kneels before her, rapturously kissing the hem of her dress, she calls him a presumptuous fool. Stung by her contempt, and disgusted with her falsehoods, Lionel vows that she must come with him, as she is bound to him for a year, but she cries so loudly for help that Sir Tristan comes to her rescue. Finding he cannot make Lionel desist, Tristan summons the soldiers, who promptly appear, wondering who can have caused such an unseemly uproar. They arrest Lionel in spite of Lady Harriet's and Nancy's evident compassion, and, after some debate, lead him away. Lionel, seeing there is no other help near, then draws the ring from his finger, and bids Plunket quickly carry it to the queen, who, if his dying father spoke the truth, will now save him from prison.

The next scene is played in the great hall of the farmhouse, where Plunket bewails the pitiful condition of Lionel, who has been failing rapidly in health ever since the fatal Richmond Fair. He wonders whether his own sadness is not also an effect of the tender passion, and is determined to see Lady Harriet

and warn her of Lionel's sad estate. Just then the door opens, and Lady Harriet and Nancy step into the house. The mistress announces that she has made a plan, whereby she hopes Lionel's peace of mind will be fully restored, and then she bids Plunket go out with Nancy, who will explain all to him.

Left alone, Lady Harriet begins singing the well-known air which perpetually haunts Lionel's memory, and the sound, reaching him, brings him into the great hall. But, although she now seems ready to listen to his wooing, he bitterly accuses her of having ruined his life, and is not mollified when she humbly entreats his pardon for having him arrested. She then goes on to relate that she was so anxious for his safety, that she herself carried his ring to the queen, and adds that the jewel proves him to be the son and heir of the late Earl of Derby, who had been wrongfully accused and banished from court. But now, the dead man's memory has been freed from all stain, and his vast possessions are to be restored to Lionel, his son. Overjoyed, and amazed to find himself the Earl of Derby, Lionel nevertheless refuses to listen to Lady Harriet's prayers for forgiveness, and when she finally offers him her hand, he rejects it with scorn, and leaves her, saying he can never trust her again.

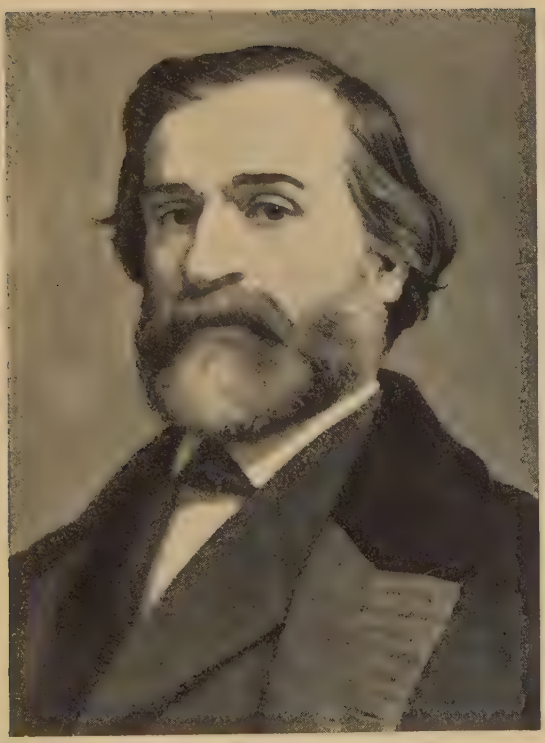
When Nancy and Plunket return, they find Lady Harriet almost beside herself with grief. She assures them, however, that although Lionel has refused to marry her, she still hopes to make him change his mind, if they will only help her to carry out a new plan, which she will impart to them very shortly. As she goes out, Plunket questions Nancy, who evades his queries, and coquettishly advises him to marry. Hoping to make her jealous, Plunket enumerates the pretty girls he could have if he wished; but, as he clearly shows that he does not care for any of them, she is not alarmed. Finally he confesses that he is in love with a charming girl, who can neither cook nor spin, but that he dares not ask her to be his. Nancy archly suggests that perhaps the charming young woman might find it an easy task to learn to cook and spin for the man she loves. Thus encouraged, Plunket asks her to marry him, but she bids him be silent until all is right between Lady Harriet and Lionel. Then, if he wishes, she says he may whisper a little word of love in her ear, — a prospect which is hailed with delight by the happy youth.

The final act is played in front of the Plunket farmhouse, where, by Lady Harriet's orders, booths have been erected, and the scene presents the appearance of another Richmond Fair.

All are working hard, and some girls are dressing up a mock sheriff, while singing that no pains have been spared to make this seem a real fair. While they are singing thus, Lady Harriet and Nancy come upon the scene, wearing their peasant costumes. They are soon followed by Plunket, who comes forward very slowly, for he is supporting Lionel, whose altered appearance rouses the compassion of all the spectators.

Their coming, however, seems the signal for the beginning of the fair, for a servant immediately announces the arrival of the sheriff, at whose sight the peasant girls all begin extolling their own perfections. Farmers now come up with their wives, in quest of maids, and the market scene is reproduced with all its noise and action. Passing through the ranks of clamouring servants, Plunket suddenly pauses before Lady Harriet, to ask what she can do. Her eyes fixed upon Lionel, Lady Harriet passionately declares that she can forsake all to follow the man she loves, and that she is ready to devote her life to him, if he will only accept her as wife. At this confession, Lionel clasps her to his heart with rapture, while Plunket, turning aside, asks Nancy what she can do. She impudently boasts that she can spin. He

promptly contradicts her, whereupon she saucily offers to bend and subdue him. This process sounds so alluring to the infatuated young farmer, that he promptly engages her, and when she lightly boxes his ears by way of earnest money, he threatens to take his revenge as soon as they are safely married. This menace amuses all the spectators, who unite with the principal actors in predicting a future full of happiness, in the familiar strains of "The Last Rose of Summer."



VERDI.

IL TROVATORE.

BESIDES "Aïda," his last and most popular opera, the Italian composer Verdi has written the familiar "Il Trovatore," or "The Troubadour," which was first given in Rome in 1853, where it won great applause. The lyric perfection of the score is the great attraction of this work, for the libretto is very laboured. It was written by Cammarano, from a Spanish drama by Gultierez, Verdi indicating the various situations, as is his usual custom. The choruses are so enticing that it is not unusual for the stage hands to join in the singing, a state of affairs which does not always have the happiest result. Such is the popularity of many of Verdi's numbers, that they have frequently been heard out of the theatre even before the first performance. When the composer brought out "Rigoletto," an opera based upon Victor Hugo's "Le roi s'amuse," we are told that he made the actors promise not to utter a note of it outside of the theatre, until it had been produced, so that the airs should be new to the public on the first night.

The opening scene of "Il Trovatore" is laid in the vestibule of the Count di Luna's palace. His attendant, Ferrando, and several other servants, are lying on the ground, before the door leading into his apartments, while armed men are seen pacing up and down in the background. As the servants are nearly asleep, Ferrando bids them rouse themselves, lest their master, returning from his nightly vigil under the window of his lady-love, should not find them ready to serve him.

One of the men now suggests that the count would not be out so often, were he not jealous of a troubadour, who has serenaded Lady Leonora every night of late. To keep the men awake, Ferrando gladly yields to the importunities of one among them, and calling them around him, tells them that their late master was once the proud father of two sons. The younger of these was still a mere infant when the nurse, awakening from a doze one day, saw a gipsy woman bending over the sleeping child, evidently weaving some magic spell. At the nurse's outcry, servants came rushing into the room, and without paying any heed to the gipsy's explanations that she was merely trying to draw the child's horoscope, they roughly ejected her from the castle.

But the little boy, who had been perfectly healthy until then, soon showed signs of illness, and as his malady was ascribed to the witch's spells, she was caught and sentenced to be burned at the stake. On her way to the place of execution, she cursed the count, and called upon her daughter to avenge her. The next day the sick child was missing, and no trace of him was ever found, except a tiny and disfigured body in the ashes of the gipsy's fire. In spite of this evidence, the count never would believe his child had perished, and when he died, he made his eldest son promise never to give up the search.

This narrative is received with marks of breathless interest by the listeners, who, from time to time, utter exclamations of horror, and eagerly inquire whether Ferrando would still be able to recognise the gipsy's daughter. Ferrando having answered in the affirmative, the listeners grimly consign her to perdition with her mother, but Ferrando tells them that the old woman still haunts the earth in various guises. The men are so superstitious, that they corroborate this statement, and describe her apparitions as a vampire, raven, or owl. It is she, they say, who caused one of the count's servants to die of fright as the clock struck twelve, and when the

midnight hour rings, the group breaks up, while all the servants look timidly around them with awestruck faces.

The next scene represents the palace gardens, with a broad flight of steps on one side, leading up to the apartments of Leonora, lady in waiting to the queen. Leonora and her maid Inez are slowly walking around in the garden, which is faintly lighted by the soft beams of a veiled moon. Inez is anxious her mistress should retire, but Leonora pays no heed to her entreaties, and laments because another night must pass without her seeing the man whom she has loved ever since she saw him unhorse all his opponents at a tournament. It was she who crowned the unknown, who disappeared shortly after, at the outbreak of the civil war. She goes on to tell her listening maid that one fine night, when the moon was full, she heard the dulcet tones of a lute, and a beautiful voice began calling her by name in the tenderest accents. Stepping out upon her balcony, to see who the troubadour might be, she perceived that it was the unknown knight, whom she has learned to love so dearly that she is now ready to die for him. Inez vainly tries to soothe her excited mistress, and sorrowfully hopes that this passion may never bring grief upon her.

Then she induces her to return to her room to rest.

They have scarcely gone, when the Count di Luna comes upon the scene. Seeing a light still burning in Leonora's window, his heart is filled with such longing to behold her, that, forgetting the hour, he impetuously starts up the steps to join her. But, before he reaches his goal, he is suddenly checked by the sound of a serenade, sung by the Troubadour, his hated rival, and his heart swells with anger, as he hears the singer describe how great would be his bliss were he only able to win the heart of the lady he loves. The sounds reach Leonora. She comes out hastily, and, mistaking the count for her lover, greets him tenderly and confesses how anxiously she has been waiting for his coming.

The count, enveloped in his long mantle, escapes detection until the Troubadour, stepping forward, angrily denounces Leonora for betraying him. His voice, and the sudden appearance of the moon from behind a cloud, reveal to Leonora her mistake. Falling wildly upon her knees, she tries to disarm her lover's anger by confessing that it is he she loves, and that sne fancied she was talking to him.

This confession, which fills the heart of the Troubadour with rapture, has a contrary effect

upon the count. He haughtily demands the musician's name and insists upon his removing the mask he wears. Urged by Leonora, the Troubadour complies, and the count then recognises him as one of the rebels, and asks how he dares venture in this neighbourhood, where a price has been set upon his head.

Manrico, for such is the Troubadour's name, mockingly tells his rival to call up the guards and denounce him ; but the count says he prefers to settle the matter by fighting a duel with him. Distracted by fear, Leonora implores them not to draw their swords, but the count is too angry to heed her pleading. Manrico tries to comfort her, by assuring her he is more than a match for his opponent ; but she is so terrified when she sees them vanish behind the bushes, that she falls to the ground in a swoon.

The next act begins in the gipsy camp in the Basque mountains. A fire is burning in a half-ruined building, where, as it is still early dawn, the gipsies are sleeping on the ground in various attitudes. One woman, the gipsy Azucena, is keeping watch by the fire, near which Manrico is lying on a mattress, holding his sword in his hand and with his eyes fixed upon the helmet at his feet. As the shadows of night pass away, the gipsies rouse themselves to begin the day's

work, and seizing their hammers, strike lusty blows upon the anvil, while they sing. After working a short time, the men call upon the women to bring them a drink, and having quenched their thirst, continue their song in praise of nature and of the gipsy maidens.

They are about to resume their labours, when Azucena, whom they all believe to be gifted with supernatural powers, suddenly begins a strange song. All crowd around to listen, and she, unconscious of their presence, describes how a woman was once burned alive, amid the execrations of a crowd which seemed to take pleasure in her sufferings. The song is so weird, and the subject so ghastly, that the gipsies ask why she sings of such sad things. But she merely answers that the song is no sadder than the event which gave rise to it, and turning toward Manrico, whispers twice: "Avenge thou me." These words, which she has often spoken before in moments of great exaltation, seem very strange to the young man, who has never yet been able to get her to explain her meaning.

Daylight having come, the gipsies suggest it is time to go down into the valley, in quest of food, and all wend their way down the mountain, singing merrily. Azucena and Manrico remain alone in camp, and when the last sounds of the

gipsy chorus have died away, the young man rises, and drawing near the fire, begs Azucena to tell him the real story of the event which she described in her song. She answers that had he not left the camp so early, to win distinction in the army, he would long ago have heard of the cruel execution of her wrongfully accused mother. Then she tells him the same story as Ferrando related to the count's servants, adding that, maddened with grief at the sight of her mother's sufferings, she made her way into the count's castle (burdened as she was by her own child), and stole the boy whom her mother was supposed to have injured. Rushing back to the fire, which was still smouldering, she hurled one of the little ones into the flames, and it was only when her fury had abated, and when she was miles away, that she discovered that she had made a mistake, and had sacrificed her own babe instead of the count's!

The mere recollection of this frightful error overpowers Azucena, and she sinks back, half fainting, while Manrico, who has been listening breathlessly, gasps aloud in his amazement. As soon as he can recover his power of speech, he eagerly inquires whether he is not her own child, and she, as if repenting the words she has spoken, hastily assures him that he is indeed

her own dear son. As he does not seem to believe her, she tells him that madness always overcomes her at the thought of the past, and reminds him that she has proved herself a devoted mother, by seeking him on the battle-field where he had been left for dead. Then, finding that life was not entirely extinct, she nursed him until he had recovered from his numerous wounds. Manrico proudly answers that all those wounds were received in his breast, and that he should not have fallen, had not the dastardly Count di Luna attacked him with all his troops.

The gipsy woman bitterly says that the count thus showed his gratitude to Manrico for sparing his life when they fought a duel together. She adds that Manrico would have done far better to kill his adversary, and inquires what induced him to show such foolish magnanimity. Then, in a beautiful aria, Manrico describes their encounter, and explains that when he was on the point of slaying his rival, his arm was suddenly arrested by a mysterious power, and a voice seemed to urge him to spare his foe. Azucena remarks that the same voice failed to influence the count, and she urges Manrico to kill him, should they ever find themselves face to face again.

The distant notes of a trumpet are now heard, and a messenger soon comes in, bearing a letter for Manrico. Reading it hastily, the young man ascertains that he is to assume the defence of the fortress of Castellor, which has just been captured by their forces. He also learns that Leonora, deluded by the report of his death, is going to assume the veil that very night, in a neighbouring convent. These tidings fill him with such dismay, that without paying any heed to Azucena's questions, he despatches the messenger for a horse, and hastily dons his armour. Then, in spite of the gipsy woman's frantic efforts to prevent his rushing into danger, he leaves the camp, determined to save his beloved or die.

The next scene is played in the cloister of a convent near Castellor, at night. Count di Luna, Ferrando, and a number of soldiers advance cautiously, and after vainly listening a few moments for sounds of chanting in the chapel, the count declares they have come in time. Notwithstanding Ferrando's objections, he says he will kidnap Leonora, for, ever since the death of his hated rival, he has counted upon her being his bride. He dwells upon the brilliancy of her smile, and passionately declares he loves her so dearly, that there is nothing he will not do to call her his.

The convent bell rings, and the count, having posted his men in the shadow, watches alone on the path which Leonora must take to enter the chapel. The men feel certain their master must succeed, and he ardently longs for the moment when his arms will close around the fair form of Leonora. As the singing of the nuns in the chapel ceases, Leonora comes out of the convent with Inez, to whom she is bidding a last farewell before taking the veil. Suddenly the count appears before her, swearing she shall never be the bride of heaven, and he is about to seize and carry her away, when Manrico steals out of the gloomy recess where he has been hiding, and stands between them. The enraptured Leonora fancies he is a heavenly messenger, but the angry count takes him for an infernal spirit. Manrico assures them that he comes neither from heaven nor hell, but that he has been miraculously saved from death to rescue Leonora. The count and his men, overpowered by a force led by Manrico's captain, Ruis, are now compelled, in spite of all resistance, to allow Manrico to lead Leonora away with him, and the nuns return alone to the convent.

The third act is played in the count's camp, very near the fortress of Castellor, which he is

besieging. The soldiers arè grouped around, playing dice, polishing their accoutrements, or walking about, while sentinels are mounting guard. The soldiers' chorus is interrupted by a blast from the trumpet. It heralds the arrival of supplementary troops, which have come to lend a hand in storming the fortress, where much booty can be secured. The soldiers are pleased at the prospect of the fight and rich rewards, and they join Ferrando in boasting of the great deeds they mean to perform on the morrow.

While they are talking thus, the count steps out of his tent, and after casting lowering glances at the fortress where Leonora has taken refuge with her beloved, he asks Ferrando what can be the meaning of a tumult which he has just heard. Ferrando answers that their men have seized a gipsy woman, whom they suspect of being a spy. At this moment Azucena is brought into camp, with hands bound. The soldiers roughly push her forward, notwithstanding her frantic entreaties to be set free. The count sternly questions her, and she tells him that she lived in the Basque mountains, poor but happy in the companionship of a son whom she is now seeking, for he has joined the army. The count, hearing she comes from his neighbourhood, asks her if she has ever heard any-

thing about his brother, who disappeared thirty years ago ; and Ferrando, observing her closely, recognises her as the old gipsy's daughter. He denounces her to the count, who in spite of her denials now orders her to be bound more closely. In her despair the poor woman calls aloud for Manrico, bidding him save his unhappy mother from the torture which awaits her in the hands of these inhuman wretches. But when the count hears that she is the mother of his hated rival, he commands that she be burned to death in full view of the fortress, and brutally tells her that her sufferings at the stake are only a foretaste of the tortures which await her in the next world. Ferrando and the soldiers fiercely echo these sentiments as they lead her off to the stake.

The next scene is played in the fortress of Castellor, where Leonora shudders at the thought of the coming assault. Manrico does his best to reassure her, and sends his captain, Ruis, to make necessary preparations for resistance. As soon as the officer has gone, Manrico begins speaking of the long and happy life he hopes to spend with Leonora, and assures her that even were he to fall on the morrow, it would be with the blessed conviction that they should not be parted long, but would meet again in heaven.

The solemn strains of the organ now summon them to prayer, and they are about to enter the chapel when Ruis rushes in, calling to Manrico to look out of the window. He breathlessly informs him that the enemy are on the point of burning a poor gipsy, and Manrico, after a single glance, cries that the woman is his unhappy mother. While Ruis hastens away to summon the troops, Manrico gives a hasty explanation to Leonora, and bidding her farewell, rushes out, determined to save the unhappy gipsy or perish in the attempt.

The last act is played in a wing of the castle of Agulfiera, at night. Leonora and Ruis come upon the scene, closely enveloped in their cloaks, and the latter softly points out the tower where Manrico has been confined. Leonora looks timidly about her, and then dismisses Ruis, saying she is going to do her best to save his master. When he has gone, she remarks that she has no fears for herself, as she carries a subtle poison in the ring she wears upon her hand. The thought of being so near her lover now fills her with deep emotion, and she fervently prays that sweet dreams may hover near him, to remind him of the happy past, and prevent his brooding over his approaching doom. The tolling of a bell, and

the sound of a mortuary hymn within the tower, terrify her, and when the voice of Manrico comes floating out of the tower, bidding her a last farewell, she almost loses consciousness. Soon, however, her failing strength returns, and with it the firm resolve to save his life even at the sacrifice of her own.

The entrance of the count and his followers causes her to shrink back into a gloomy corner, and from thence she overhears the count order the gipsy to the stake and her son to the block. His men having gone, the count wonders aloud where Leonora may be, for he has vainly sought for her in the fortress of Castellor, which is now in his power.

In answer to his question, Leonora stands before him, and, in the ensuing conversation, pleads wildly but in vain for the life of her lover. Her tears and supplications are alike useless, so seeing he is about to leave her, to hasten the prisoner's doom, she clings to him, and brokenly offers to be his wife if he will only allow her to see Manrico once more, and to set him free. Incredulous at first, the count finally believes her, and calling his guards, gives them orders to set the prisoner at large. While he is thus engaged, the unhappy Leonora eagerly sucks the poison out of her ring, for she is

determined to die as soon as her lover is released, and never to belong to the count.

After expressing his raptures at having won her promise, the count leads her into the tower, where, in the mean time, Manrico has been watching his unhappy mother. She is lying on a mattress, where she tosses restlessly, longing for the freedom which her son would fain obtain for her. His despair at the realisation of his helplessness, rouses her from the thought of her suffering, and she feebly tells him that she knows her end is very near, and that death will soon be there to set her free.

She is so exhausted by all she has gone through, that her mind soon wanders, and hearing the sound of footsteps in the corridor, she begins to rave of her mother's execution. Then, soothed by Manrico's gentle words and caresses, she dreamily sings of their happy mountain home, where she always fell asleep to the sound of his lute. She has barely relapsed into silence and slumber, when the prison door opens to admit Leonora. At first, Manrico can scarcely believe that the joy of a parting interview has been vouchsafed him, and when Leonora assures him that she has secured his freedom, he is amazed. Urged to depart, he starts toward the door with her, and

it is only when she refuses to accompany him, that his suspicions are aroused. Seeing she persists in sending him away alone, although he passionately assures her life is worthless without her, he suddenly turns upon her and accuses her of having won his freedom at the cost of their love, and of being faithless to him.

This reproach offers a strange contrast, in its passion and concentrated anger, to Azucena's continued murmurs about free life in the mountains. Leonora, overcome with grief, falls at his feet, wildly begging his pardon, and imploring him to go, lest her sacrifice should prove vain and the poison take effect before he is free. These words are a revelation to Manrico, who now beseeches her forgiveness, and loudly upbraids himself for having misjudged her. But the deadly poison is acting even more speedily than Leonora expected, and she sinks back lifeless as the count comes into the cell.

A moment suffices to reveal what has taken place, and, thirsting for revenge, the count calls his guards and bids them behead Manrico without delay. This order is welcome to the unhappy prisoner, who, bending once more over his sleeping mother, kisses her good-bye and then calmly follows the guards. The slamming

of the prison door rouses Azucena, and when she looks wildly around her, asking for her son, the count drags her to the window, and forces her to behold his execution.

When the axe has fallen, the unhappy gipsy, turning wildly, informs the count that he has slain his own brother, and expires, crying: "Mother, thou art avenged!"

LUCIA OF LAMMERMOOR.

THE Italian composer Donizetti is the author of sixty-three operas, which have been represented in his own country. They have not all found favour, however, so only one third of the whole number have been given in England. Among these, the best known are, "Anna Boleyn," "Lucrezia Borgia," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "La Fille du Régiment," and "La Favorita." The three last named are still frequently seen. It is generally admitted that "Lucia di Lammermoor," owing to its beautiful melodies, is the most likely of all to keep its place in the popular répertoire. This opera is based upon Sir Walter Scott's "Bride of Lammermoor," but the libretto is mainly the work of Cammarano. Donizetti himself designed and wrote the last act, for he often arranged librettos to suit himself, and Royer and Voez revised the whole work. Lucia of Lammermoor was first produced at Naples, in 1835. Since then, the opera has been heard in all parts of the world, and the greatest singers of this century have

taken the parts of its principal characters. The choruses are so familiar and taking, that they are sung and whistled by the stage hands, who cannot always be prevented from taking part in the performance behind the scenes.

The rising curtain discloses the vestibule of the Scotch Castle of Lammermoor, the residence of Henry Ashton, and of his sister Lucy. All the retainers of the Lord of Lammermoor are assembled, and Norman, the steward, bids them go down and search the neighbouring ravine and ruins. He strongly suspects that some one is hiding there, and wishes to have the mystery cleared up. The chorus leaves him, promising to search diligently, and soon after its departure, Norman sees his master draw near, and is struck by his worried appearance. In answer to his question, Henry Ashton admits that he can know no rest as long as Edgar Ravenswood, the enemy of his race, defies him, and his sister refuses to marry as he wishes.

The chaplain, Raymond, who has entered with him, now urges that it is quite natural Lucy should be averse to matrimony, as she is still in deep mourning for her idolised mother. But Norman scornfully answers that she is not so indifferent to love as they would fain believe. Henry urges him to explain what he means, so

in spite of Raymond's dismay, Norman goes on to relate that as Lucy was returning from her mother's grave one day, she was pursued by a mad bull. Death seemed inevitable, when a sudden shot was heard, and the creature dropped lifeless at her feet.

He adds that Lucy's saviour, although unknown to the castle inmates, has since then daily met the young girl near the fountain, and confesses that he shrewdly suspects this man is the detested Edgar. This news fills Henry's heart with burning anger, and he vehemently calls down Heaven's curses upon the man who has thus attempted to win the love of his sister. His wrath is viewed with regret by Norman and Raymond; they implore him to restrain it as the chorus return, noisily proclaiming the success of their search. The men declare that when they reached the ruined tower, a stranger came out, sprang upon his waiting steed, and dashed away, clearing the torrent at a bound.

When Henry hears that this man was Edgar, he solemnly swears to be revenged, in spite of Raymond's efforts to pacify him. These sentiments, although deprecated by the chaplain, are warmly approved by Norman and the chorus, who vow that Edgar shall not escape from their hands.

The next scene is played in the park, near the fountain. Lucy and her maid have come there, by appointment, to meet Edgar, but he does not appear. Lucy is afraid of being found out by her brother, and shudders whenever her glances rest upon the limpid waters near her. Her maid inquiring the cause of her tremor, Lucy says that a Ravenswood knight once murdered his lady-love, and cast her body into those waters. Then she goes on to relate how the ghost of the unhappy lady once appeared to her. She says that the spectre raised a threatening hand before it vanished, and that when she looked at the water it was of a lurid, sanguinary hue. This apparition, the presage of some great misfortune, was, however, so closely followed by the coming of her lover, and the plighting of their troth, that she had for a time entirely forgotten the occurrence, to dwell only upon the rapture of being loved.

As she ends this confession, her maid whispers that her lover is coming, and discreetly withdraws to a neighbouring thicket to mount guard. Drawing rapidly near, Edgar now tenderly begs Lucy's pardon for keeping her waiting. He next tells her, that before dawn, he must leave Scotland, and go to France, where weighty business awaits him. Lucy gently reproaches

LUCIA OF LAMMERMOOR.

him for deserting her thus, but when he explains that before his departure he means to visit her brother, and ask her hand as a pledge of future peace between them, she nervously implores him to keep their love a secret.

Edgar hotly answers that her brother has no cause for resentment. Still, not content with killing the elder Ravenswood, he has robbed him of the greater part of his possessions, and pursues an unhappy race. Edgar adds, that although he had sworn vengeance for these wrongs, he has been willing to forego it for her sake, but when she again pleads with him, he consents to do as she wishes. After solemnly pledging their troth, the two lovers part, exchanging repeated promises to write, and to think of each other every hour of the day and night. Every wandering breeze is to waft sweet messages to and fro, and after a lingering farewell, the curtain falls upon the first act.

The second act opens in a hall in the Castle of Lammermoor. Norman, coming in, tells his master that Lucy will soon appear, and Henry confesses that he dreads meeting her. All his kinsmen are assembled beneath his roof to witness her marriage to Arthur Bucklaw. But in spite of all the pressure brought to bear upon her, and her brother's suppression of all

Edgar's letters, Lucy has remained firm. To force her to marry Arthur, Norman has just forged a document, which announces Edgar's marriage while abroad. This letter he now hands to Henry, who bids him watch for Arthur Bucklaw's coming, while he makes a last effort to persuade Lucy to marry his friend.

As Norman goes out, Lucy comes in, and Henry, advancing towards her, wishes her all happiness on this, her wedding day. But Lucy has no answer for his good wishes, and when he asks the cause of her silence, she points to her pale and sunken cheeks and denounces him for treating her with such cruelty. He angrily silences her, urges her to vindicate her fair name by accepting the suitor he offers her, and when she again refuses, saying she is pledged to another, he produces the forged letter, as an evidence of Edgar's lack of faith.

Forced to read this epistle, and never suspecting fraud, Lucy exclaims that her heart is broken, and that there is nothing left for her but death. But her brother urges her to live, and not to disgrace her name and race by pining for a man who has treated her with scorn. Then, taking advantage of her pitiful state, he tells her that the sounds they hear without

herald the coming of Arthur Bucklaw. He adds that, having taken part in the late rebellion, he is at Arthur's mercy. Unless she marries, and thus silences him, her brother will be doomed to the death of a traitor. As Lucy still resists, he tries to work upon her feelings by describing the tortures which await him. But Lucy sadly turns to leave him, saying she cannot recall her solemn promise. In the corridor, however, she meets the chaplain, and eagerly asks him if he has any news. Raymond answers that although he once shared her suspicions, and believed her brother intercepted their letters, he now feels convinced that Edgar has forsaken her. This seems certain, for the chaplain has received no answer to a letter which he secretly dispatched by a safe hand. Lucy, in despair, asks what she must do, so he solemnly advises her to submit to the inevitable, and accept the bridegroom her brother urges upon her. He adds that her promise was not binding, as it had not been made at the altar, and warns her that her mother's spectre will haunt her, and leave her no peace, if she does not sacrifice herself to save her only brother from the executioner's block. Thus driven to bay, the unhappy Lucy tearfully yields, and Raymond blesses her for her unselfishness,

foretelling that she will eventually receive her reward.

In the next scene, all the actors have assembled to await the coming of the bride for the signing of the marriage contract. The people are in festive array, and the chorus sing of the return of hope, and of the sun of happiness which is to drive away the clouds of past grief. Arthur Bucklaw greets Henry Ashton warmly, promising to help him as a brother, and eagerly asks for his bride, whom he has not yet seen. Henry answers that Lucy will soon be there, and cautions Arthur to pay no attention to her tears, which are merely caused by regret for her dead mother. Such sorrow seems very natural to the bridegroom expectant, who, however, inquires whether there is any truth in the report that Edgar was his sister's suitor. Henry is just giving Arthur to understand that Lucy was indifferent to the young man when she appears. Her bearing is so languid, and her tears flow so fast, that Henry deems it advisable to repeat that they are for her dead mother. Thus encouraged, Arthur advances, and kneeling before Lucy offers her his heart and hand. She stands there, impassive, until a harsh whisper from her brother compels her to take up the pen, and reluctantly sign her

name to a document, which binds her to Arthur Bucklaw for ever.

She has scarcely done so, to her brother's intense relief, when the door opens, and amid general consternation Edgar comes into the room. Edgar and Henry simultaneously wonder what mysterious power restrains their hand, and prevents their attacking each other. But they finally recognise that their love for Lucy constrains them, and the latter wishes she were dead, for no hope of happiness now remains to her. Raymond, too, expresses his compassion for the unhappy girl, ere he joins Henry, Arthur, Norman, and the chorus in bidding the intruder begone.

But Edgar stands there immovable, declaring blood will flow if any dare attack him. Dreading an affray, Raymond implores all present to sheathe their swords, and solemnly warns them that vengeance belongs only to the Lord. Summoned to account for his presence in this assembly, Edgar then says that he has come to claim his promised bride He refuses to believe Henry's statement that she is pledged to another until she herself assures him that she has signed the marriage contract he beholds. Maddened with grief, he gives back her love-token, and without consenting to listen to a

word of excuse, demands the return of his pledge, and solemnly curses her. Henry and the chorus are so indignant that they again threaten him, but he defies them. Then, hearing Lucy pray Heaven to watch over and protect him, and advised by Raymond and the ladies to flee, Edgar leaves the room and the curtain falls upon a scene of great dramatic force.

The next act opens in a room in the ruined Tower of Wolf's Crag, the ancestral home of the Ravenswoods, where Edgar, the last representative of his race, is watching a storm gathering over the evening landscape. He compares the lowering clouds to the heavy shadows which overhang his destiny, and is surprised to hear rapid hoof-beats amid the ominous roll of distant thunder. While he is wondering who can be abroad in such a storm, the door opens and Henry Ashton comes stalking in. He solemnly announces that he has come hither to challenge Edgar to meet him on the morrow. After exchanging sundry sarcastic and bitter remarks, they arrange to fight at dawn on the morrow, each boasting he will lay his opponent low. They agree only in their longing that morning should hasten so they can give free play to their wrath. Having thus settled the matter to their mutual satisfaction, Henry returns home, where

his guests are feasting in the great hall, and merrily singing the wedding song. Their joyous tones are silenced, however, by the hasty entrance of the terrified Raymond. He gradually relates that the bride and bridegroom having retired to their apartment, a blood-curdling shriek suddenly struck his ear. Breaking through the fast closed doors, he found Arthur Bucklaw bathed in his blood, and already dead, while Lucy, a raving maniac, stood over him, brandishing the sword with which she had committed her awful crime.

The chorus is horror-struck at these tidings, and all shrink back in terror, as Lucy comes upon the stage. Although her garments are blood-stained, she has no recollection of the murder she has just committed, but babbles of her lover and of their frequent trysts near the fountain. Then she suddenly fancies she hears the wedding hymn, and holding the hand of an imaginary husband, expresses her joy at being for ever united to one she loves so well.

Her raving ends as Henry comes upon the scene. He has just learned the crime, and vows his sister shall be punished. But Raymond and the chorus bid him restrain his anger, for the unfortunate girl has been bereft of her senses by his cruelty. He soon sees that they are

right, and that his sister is hopelessly insane; for Lucy again begins raving. Her protestations of undying love for Edgar, her loathing at the fancied sound of Arthur's name, and her pitiful entreaties to be spared compulsion, fill Henry's heart with remorse. Gently he now bids her attendants remove her, and when she has gone, Raymond turns angrily upon Norman. He accuses him of having brought all these misfortunes upon the unhappy girl, by revealing the secret of her love for Edgar, and urging her brother to keep alive the family feud.

The next scene represents the lonely spot where the Ravenswoods lie buried. Here, although it is not yet dawn, Edgar is awaiting Henry, and mournfully calling upon the grave to open and receive an unhappy wight, whose hopes have all been blasted, and who no longer wishes to live. Then he sings that the wild-flowers will soon be growing over his grave, and implores Lucy never to pass the spot with her husband, but to respect the last resting-place of one who died for love of her.

While he is waiting there, the wedding guests come down the hill from the Castle of Lammermoor. They are singing a dirge for an unhappy maiden who will never see the sun rise again. Their wailing cries startle Edgar, who

breathlessly inquires who it is they are lamenting. When they tell him that Lucy is dying, he cannot believe their words, until the mournful sound of the passing bell falls upon his ear. He then swears that he cannot and will not survive the girl he loves, and is about to rush away to see her once more, when Raymond comes to tell him that Lucy has gone to heaven. Edgar passionately answers that although she has preceded him, they will soon be united, and, drawing his dagger, suddenly plunges it deep into his breast. As he sinks down, amid the exclamations of Raymond and the chorus, he again cries that he is going to join his beloved, and then sinks back lifeless. A moment later the curtain falls, while the chorus pray that Edgar may find forgiveness for his sins, and be admitted in heaven.

NORMA.

BORN in Sicily, educated at Naples, and buried in Paris at the early age of thirty-two, Bellini is the composer of three operas, which have won admiring plaudits in all parts of the world. These three famous operas are "La Sonnambula," "Norma," which appeared one year later, and "I Puritani," his last work, which, at first, was played even more frequently than the two other operas. The libretto for "Norma" was written by Romani, and is based on a French play by Soumet. The opera was produced at La Scala, in Milan, in 1832, with such success that it entirely supplanted the tragedy upon which it was founded. Since then, the opera has been heard everywhere, the greatest singers having taken part in it. The rôle of Norma has been assumed not only by Pasta, for whom it was written, but by Grisi and Titiens, not to mention noted singers of our own day. The story of the opera is as follows: —

In the days of Julius Cæsar, when Rome's dominion had been established over all Gaul,

CORRIDOR, PARIS OPERA HOUSE.

legions were posted in sundry places to maintain order. The conquered races were thus kept in subjection, although they were still allowed to practise their own religion. As the curtain rises upon the first act of "Norma," we are suddenly transported into the sacred grove of the Druids, in the centre of which stands the oak of their principal god, Irminsul. Directly under this oak, we see one of the great stone altars, upon which they occasionally offered a human victim. It is night, but twinkling lights are discerned between the trees. The Gallic army appears, and the sound of military music breaks the forest silence. In the procession are a number of Druids, and last of all comes the most important of their order, the Archdruid Oroveso. In solemn accents, he bids his followers keep close watch for the rising moon, and tells them to strike the sacred gong when it appears. Then, in answer to the priests' inquiry whether his daughter, the prophetess Norma, is coming to gather the mistletoe, he assures them that she will do so. The Druids are overjoyed, and fervently pray that Irminsul's spirit may move her to bid them rise against the Romans, whose yoke has grown unbearable to their independent spirits. Oroveso avers that the time will soon come when the brazen clang of war

will call them to battle ; then all scatter to watch for the rising of the moon. From time to time, their voices are heard in the distance, but when the scene is quite deserted, Pollio, the proconsul, appears, accompanied by his lieutenant, Flavio. Both are enveloped in their ample togas, and move cautiously, for they know that they would be slain were they found within the sacred precincts. Flavio reminds Pollio of their danger, saying that Norma warned them not to come hither. But the proconsul shudders at the mere mention of her name, and questioned by his lieutenant, confesses that although secretly married to Norma, the mother of his children, he no longer loves her. Instead, he has been seized by a sudden and irresistible passion for Adalgisa, one of the ministrants in the temple of the bloodthirsty god Irminsul. This confession shocks Flavio, who cautions his superior not to let his infatuation be known, lest it should call down upon him the wrath of the insulted Norma.

The Roman leader acknowledges that he is not without fear, especially since he dreamt that he and Adalgisa were sundered at the marriage altar, by a heavy pall which looked like a Druid mantle. He adds that he then heard a voice cry, " It is thus that Norma makes an

example of the man who has proved a traitor to love."

He has scarcely finished relating this ominous dream, when the sacred gong is struck, and the chorus is heard loudly proclaiming the rising of the moon. Aware that the druidical rites will soon begin, Flavio tries to draw Pollio away from this spot; but the latter resists, and only departs after declaring that, secure in the protection of a greater power, he has determined to overthrow the altar of Irminsul and thus obtain the girl he loves.

The two friends have scarcely vanished, when the chorus returns, loudly calling upon Norma to appear, gather the mistletoe from the sacred oak, and give the signal for the war which will drive the Roman eagles back to Italy. At their call Norma comes upon the scene, clad in white, crowned with vervain, bearing a golden sickle, and attended by all the priestesses of the temple. Amid solemn silence, Norma mounts upon the Druid stone, and after glancing around her like one inspired, she sternly demands the meaning of seditious cries, which should be silent until the will of their deity had been made manifest through her. In answer to Oroveso's question when they may arise and end the Roman tyranny, she solemnly says that the auspicious

moment has not yet come, and silences the people's murmurs by predicting dire misfortunes if they dare to take up arms before she gives the signal. To comfort them, she then prophesies the ultimate downfall of proud Rome, saying that the deadliest germ of destruction lies in the vices to which it is rapidly falling a prey.

Then, after cutting the sacred mistletoe according to the prescribed rites, Norma steps down from the stone, and advances until the moonlight streams down upon her upturned face. While all kneel reverently, she addresses a solemn prayer to the moon, the chaste queen of heaven, imploring her to temper the martial ardour of the Gauls, and to send down her peace unto their hearts. The chorus takes up the strain, and then Norma announces that although the service is ended, no profane foot must tread the forest, until their god makes his wishes known through her lips. The people promise to obey her, and swear that whenever she gives the signal they will fall upon the enemy, and that the proconsul will be the first to die under their blows. These words remind Norma of her affection for the man they hate, and she sadly acknowledges to herself, that although he has forsaken her, she is loath to punish him in any way. She longs for his love, and solemnly

swears to defend him, if he will only return to his allegiance. After this aside, the procession leaves the stage, the chorus singing that however slow in its coming, the day of vengeance will be none the less awful when it appears.

The sacred grove is deserted when Adalgisa comes upon the scene, looking timidly around her. The solemn rites are over, and now, unseen, she can revisit the spot where the Roman first addressed her, and by his tender speeches made her forget the vows which bind her to her god. In her terror lest she should yield to his oft renewed entreaties, she now falls prostrate upon the altar steps, praying for strength and protection. While she is thus engaged, Pollio comes back, and beholding her, dismisses his attendant and advances toward her. Adalgisa is surprised to see him, and when he inquires the cause of her tears, she tries to evade giving him an answer. But he will not leave her, as she implores, and after angrily denouncing her cruel god, swears he will follow her wherever she goes, for he acknowledges only one deity, the god of love.

As she remains obdurate, he upbraids her, and bids her offer him up in sacrifice to Irminsul, a course which would be less cruel than her present conduct. Poor Adalgisa tries to excuse

herself, saying she is suffering untold agonies, but that she must be true to her vows. Still, when he announces his departure on the morrow, she is stricken with such grief at the thought of parting with him, that he renews his pleading. He urges her to accompany him to Rome, where every happiness awaits her, and where he will be her devoted spouse. Although his words and actions vividly remind her of the past, and of the impression his first love-whispers produced upon her, Adalgisa resists his prayers and commands. But when he says she will be the cause of his death, she finally consents to do as he wishes, solemnly promising to meet him here on the morrow, and forsaking her god and her country, follow him wherever he goes. This promise fills Pollio's heart with rapture, and ere they part he foretells a blissful future for them both.

The next scene is played in Norma's apartments; as the curtain rises, she and her handmaiden Clothilde come in, leading two little children. Norma, kissing them, bids Clothilde take them away to their secret retreat, as to-day she can find no solace in their caresses. The wondering handmaiden inquires the cause of this strange mood, and Norma confesses that although she still loves her children passionately, she de-

spises herself for having proved faithless to her vow and married in secret. Then she goes on, in answer to further questions, to explain that Pollio has been recalled to Rome, and that she is almost sure he intends to forsake her and their unhappy children. The sound of approaching footsteps makes her tremble, lest her carefully-guarded secret should be discovered, so embracing the little ones, she again bids Clothilde take them away.

When they have gone, Adalgisa draws near, adjuring herself to be steadfast, and when Norma questions her concerning her pallor and sadness, she falls at her feet and gradually confesses that she has proved faithless to her religious vow by falling deeply in love. Her artless confession reminds Norma of her own youth ; and when Adalgisa says that her lover first addressed her in the forest recesses, when she was praying at the altar of Irminsul, Norma comments that it was just so that her own wooing began. Encouraged by the priestess, the girl confesses how deeply the words of love have sunk into her heart, and when Norma assures her that she shall be released from her vows, and united to the man she loves, she can scarcely contain herself for joy. After a beautiful duet, in which these sentiments are expressed, Norma

asks the name of her lover, and the timid Adalgisa confesses that he is a Roman, and suddenly exclaims that he is coming, as Pollio enters the room. At first, Norma cannot believe that she has heard aright; but Adalgisa confirms her words, and Pollio, drawing near to protect her from Norma's anger, shows that she has told the truth. This sudden revelation of Pollio's treachery is too much for Norma, who vehemently denounces the Roman, saying he alone is at fault, for he has proved faithless to his wife and children, and has deluded an innocent girl.

This accusation seems incredible to Adalgisa, but when Norma compels her to look at Pollio, she sees unmistakable proofs of his guilt in his trembling attitude and averted glance. Sinking to the earth, she covers her face with her hands. Then Norma tells her, in heartrending tones, that she has been the victim of a cruel deception, and that it would be better for her to die, than to be wedded to a man who would cause her tears to flow without ceasing. Adalgisa expresses her horror at the discovery she has just made, and Pollio joins in the trio, imploring Norma to pour out all the vials of her wrath upon his head, but to spare the poor girl any further revelation of their guilt.

Then Pollio prepares to withdraw, and tries to take Adalgisa with him, but she resists, saying he is Norma's husband. Overcome by his passion, Pollio swears that he has no affection left for his wife, but that all his love is centred upon Adalgisa. Hearing this, Norma haughtily bids the girl follow him; but Adalgisa swears she would rather die than yield to unhallowed love. When Norma hears this decision, she bids the faithless Pollio begone, adding that her curses will follow him day and night, and torment him like avenging Furies until the hour of his death. The Roman makes a last and frantic effort to stem the torrent of her wrath, and to win her consent to his union with Adalgisa; then, seeing she will not listen to him, he madly curses the destiny which once made him the slave of her charms. These passionate outbursts of Norma and Pollio are offset by Adalgisa's pathetic attempts to forget her own sorrows, and bring about a reconciliation between them. But although she implores Pollio to be faithful to his wife and children, he remains obdurate, until they are startled by the chorus, summoning Norma to appear in the temple, where the god Irminsul is loudly calling for her ministry.

Norma and Adalgisa shudder at this call, for

both know that it is a signal of danger to the Romans, and they urge Pollio to flee from coming destruction. But he scorns all thought of peril, and fiercely vows to avenge himself by destroying the temple of their dreaded god.

The sound of the sacred gong is heard without, and Norma, having haughtily dismissed Pollio, hastens to the temple, where her presence is impatiently expected.

The next scene represents Norma's bedroom, where her two children are sleeping peacefully upon a couch covered with bear-skins. Norma comes noiselessly in, and having set down the lamp she holds, glides toward the unconscious little ones. Her eyes are wild and glaring, for she has come thither to kill her babes, thinking death will be preferable for them to subjection to a cruel step-mother. But, at the sight of their helpless beauty, maternal love conquers, and although she tries to nerve her arm to strike, by reminding herself that Pollio's treacherous blood flows in their veins, she soon drops her dagger, and instead of slaying, embraces them passionately. As she is still determined to take her own life, it behooves her to provide for her helpless offspring, so she calls Clothilde and bids her send for Adalgisa without delay. While waiting for her coming, the unhappy Norma

sadly expresses her remorse for having proved faithless to the vows which bound her to the temple. Then, seeing the fair maid she sent for enter the apartment, she bids her draw near and begs her to fulfil a last request. Full of tender compassion for the woman she has so unconsciously wronged, Adalgisa solemnly promises to do whatever her friend wishes. Then Norma tells her she means to die, and explains that she wants her to promise to protect and care for her orphan children, taking them to Pollio, who, she trusts, will prove more faithful to a second wife than he has been to his first. Adalgisa is almost speechless with surprise, but Norma, thinking only of her babes, fervently implores her to watch over their infancy and not to expose them to any privation or injustice. Adalgisa, who little expected such a request, now declares that Norma must live for her children's sake, and that instead of marrying Pollio, she will return to her place at the shrine of her divinity. When Norma reminds her of the promise just given, she generously exclaims that she will ruthlessly break any oath which does not tend to restore the happiness it has been her misfortune to disturb. She further adds, that Pollio's infatuation for her will soon be at an end, and

that she is going in quest of him, to implore him to return to his allegiance to his wife and children.

Norma's pride will not permit such a request, and as she still insists upon dying, Adalgisa makes the children kneel before their mother, and in a touching song implores her to have pity upon them. She continues her supplications, until Norma, who has been steeling her heart against them, and against her repeated assurances that Pollio still loves her, finally consents to live. Conquered by the self-sacrificing generosity of Adalgisa, who has renounced love for her sake, Norma now tenderly embraces her, swearing that henceforth they will live together, comfort each other, and devote themselves to the two children, who will belong equally to them both.

The next scene is played in a solitary spot in the Druids' forest, where the Gallic army comes to join the priests. The latter eagerly question the soldiers, who answer that the Romans have not yet gone, for their ensigns are still waving above their camp. These tidings are not unwelcome, and all unite in exhorting each other to wait in silence for the signal to begin their great revolt. Then they eagerly crowd around Oroveso, who has just appeared,

and listen breathlessly while he reports that although he hoped to bring more welcome orders, the gods still refuse to sanction their uprising. In dismay, the assembled Gauls now clamour to know whether they are always to remain passive under the Roman yoke, or if their hated foe will return to the banks of his native Tiber? In answer to these, and sundry other questions, Oroveso sadly answers that a heavier hand will soon rest upon them, but that until their god speaks by the mouth of Norma, they must restrain their anger. After listening to his advice, the chorus leave the trysting spot, solemnly swearing that when the moment for action comes, Rome will succumb beneath the weight of their long pent up fury.

The next scene is played in the temple of Irminsul, where Norma confidently awaits the result of an embassy undertaken by Adalgisa, who, in the mean time, has prevailed upon her to allow her to make an attempt to bring Pollio back to his family. Norma's hopes are, however, all blasted by the entrance of Clothilde, who sadly acknowledges that Adalgisa has failed, and has come back dejected to the temple whence Pollio swears he will soon carry her off by force. These tidings fill Norma's heart with jealous anger, and, determined to frustrate Pollio's plan,

she rushes to the altar, and striking the brazen shield gives the long expected signal for war.

Priests and warriors throng unto the temple at this sound, and when all have assembled, and Norma stands before them in her wonted place, they eagerly bid her make their god's wishes known. Three pregnant words, "War, carnage, and destruction," now fall from the priestess' lips, greatly amazing the audience, who so lately heard her advocate peace. But when she assures them the auspicious moment has come, they are only too glad to take up their arms, and they fervently join her in singing a fierce war song, in which they predict the enemy's awful doom.

As soon as the hymn is over Oroveso looks around him for the human victim, which, according to their custom, should now be sacrificed upon the altar to complete their solemn rites. Norma is proudly telling him that the gods will supply a suitable offering, when a sudden tumult is heard in another part of the temple. All heads are turned to discover the cause of the unseemly commotion, and all start with surprise when Clothilde rushes in, announcing the capture of a bold Roman, who had forced his way unto the priestesses' apartments to kidnap one of the virgins.

These tidings fill the spectators with rage, and they doom the intruder to immediate death, while Norma anxiously wonders if Pollio has already attempted to fulfil his threat. Her doubt is soon dispelled, for he is soon brought upon the scene. He haughtily refuses to answer Oroveso's questions, and the latter is about to stab him when Norma springs forward, saying it is her privilege to slay the victim. Pollio is now at her mercy, and her heart is so full of rage that he feels he cannot escape. But suddenly, when the sacrificial knife is already raised, Norma's courage wavers, and, under the pretext of questioning the captive to discover whether he has any accomplices, she temporarily dismisses the people, who reluctantly depart.

Left alone in the temple with Pollio, Norma bitterly assures him that she knows his purpose in venturing into the temple, and offers him life and liberty if he will only renounce Adalgisa and never attempt to see her again. But Pollio declares he has not fallen so low as to turn craven, and, in spite of her threats, remains firm, haughtily daring her to do her worst. Norma then terrifies him by describing how the dagger she holds nearly slew his innocent children, and when he snatches it from her, saying it is his place to die, and not theirs, she tells him that

not only he, but all the Romans, and the perjured Adalgisa, are doomed to perish.

Hearing this, Pollio falls upon his knees before her, imploring her to spare Adalgisa, and not to let her be burned alive, the cruel punishment reserved for priestesses who have broken their vows. But Norma revels in the thought that she can now make him suffer some of the pangs she has endured, until, seeing he will kill himself if she does not hinder it she calls the people back into the temple. All are eager to hear the result of her examination, and when she solemnly tells them that one of their priestesses has proved faithless, they doom her to die with the Roman.

While they prepare the pyre for the unknown culprit, Pollio vehemently pleads with Norma not to reveal Adalgisa's involuntary guilt. She seems to pay no heed to his entreaties, but when the people call upon her to name the criminal, she impressively denounces herself. The assembled Gauls can scarcely believe they have heard aright, but Pollio, perceiving that Norma has generously sacrificed herself to save her rival, suddenly realises her peril, and implores her to retract her admission.

She remains firm, in spite of his frantic pleading, till, convinced at last of her guilt, Oroveso

and the chorus solemnly say she must die. Now that it is too late, Pollio sees how sorely he has misjudged Norma's noble nature. Her generous sacrifice and evident determination not to survive him, rekindle his former passion, and he vehemently implores her to forgive his past infidelity. She grants him her pardon, tells him that fate is stronger than man, and assures him that they will soon be united in the indissoluble bonds of death, tidings which Pollio receives with rapture.

In the mean while, the preparations for the sacrifice have been completed, and Norma, seeing her end is near, confesses to her father that she is a mother, and implores his protection for her innocent babes. At first, the archdruid is so horrified at this revelation, that he spurns his guilty daughter, but he finally yields to her frantic prayers, and not only gives her the required promise, but assures her of his love and forgiveness.

Free from all anxiety on the score of their children, and happy once more at the thought of being together, Pollio and Norma declare they will gladly mount the funeral pyre, where they will be purged from all earthly grossness, and whence their ransomed souls will escape to heaven

The chorus then envelop Norma in a black veil, emblematic of her guilt, and pronounce upon her the usual awful curses. Next they lead her to the pyre, where Pollio has preceded her. He eagerly holds out his arms to her, bidding her come, so they can die together, and simultaneously begin a new and happier life. While they stand thus, clasped in each other's arms, the smoke slowly rises around them, and as Oroveso bursts forth into a wild lament, the curtain slowly falls upon this dramatic climax to an impressive scene.

MIGNON.

THE two principal works of the French composer Ambroise Thomas are the operas of "Hamlet" and of "Mignon." The latter was first produced in Paris, in 1866, where it met with immediate success. From there, it has journeyed all over the world, and has become a favourite wherever it has been heard. The libretto, which is founded upon Goethe's well-known "Wilhelm Meister," was written by Messrs. Carré and Barbier, who adapted the story to operatic purposes by making a number of changes in it. A few of the verses are, however, the work of Goethe, such as the song of Mignon, which, in a measure, may be considered the motif of the whole work.

As the curtain rises upon this opera, we find ourselves transported to Germany, where, in front of a village inn, a number of people are sitting at small tables, drinking beer. The inn waiters hurry to and fro, while the guests merrily sing their drinking song. They are thus occupied, when the aged minstrel, Lothario,

comes upon the scene. He pauses in the gateway of the inn-yard, gazes vaguely around him, and, seizing his harp, sings of his long wanderings, and his incessant search for a child whom he loves and hopes to find some day.

His is a familiar figure in these regions, so one of the drinkers soon invites him to come and join them under the shady trellis. Lothario accepts this kindly invitation, and while he refreshes himself, the chorus repeat their drinking song. This ended, some of the singers rise from their seats to group themselves in front of the inn. Suddenly, a loud noise is heard, and some of the peasants exclaim that Giarno, the gipsy, is coming with his troupe. They have scarcely spoken, when the gipsies come marching upon the scene, drawing a cart on which they have piled up their few utensils, and in the back of which Mignon lies asleep on a bundle of straw. At a sign from Giarno, a party of gipsies, tambourine in hand, begin a wild dance to the music of Zeffi's violin. These merry sounds reach the ears of Filina, an actress stopping at the inn. She steps out upon her balcony, where she summons her companion Laertes to see the gipsies dance. The peasants, villagers, Laertes, and Filina comment upon the light-footed

dancers, and fling a few pennies at the gipsy's feet. Graciously thanking the spectators for their gifts, Giarno announces that his principal performer shall now honour them with her famous egg-dance. He pompously directs his followers to make the necessary preparations, and an old gipsy woman spreads out a faded carpet, upon which a lad places some eggs. Stepping to the wagon, Giarno rudely awakens Mignon, who, dazed by the light, and only half awake, comes slowly forward, still enveloped in her cloak. Her appearance is so odd, that Filina mockingly asks the chief what his performer may be. To the intense amusement of all the spectators, he answers that the creature is neither woman, girl, nor boy, but merely Mignon. The girl, in the mean time, has been glancing resentfully around her, and when Giarno roughly orders her to begin her dance, she angrily stamps her foot and refuses to do so. This rebellion irritates Giarno, who, calling for his stick, raises it threateningly over Mignon, saying he will strike her if she does not obey. Before the stick can fall, however, the aged harper rushes madly forward, and throwing his arms around Mignon, vows he will protect her. But the gipsy chief violently thrusts him aside, repeats his order to Mignon, and when she again refuses

to dance, raises his stick once more to strike her. This time, he is thrust aside by the vigorous young arm of Guglielmo, a young gentleman who has just stepped into the inn-yard, closely followed by a servant carrying his portemanteau. As the gipsy resists, the young man calmly produces a pistol, and thus coerced, Giarno promises not to beat Mignon. To silence his complaints, and especially to attract the attention of the young stranger, Filina throws her purse down to the gipsy, while Mignon divides her nosegay in two parts and timidly bestows the flowers upon Lothario and Guglielmo in token of her gratitude.

While she is giving thanks to the Virgin for her timely protection, Guglielmo marvels at the strange fate which brought him here at such an opportune moment. Filina and Laertes exchange comments about him, while the aged Lothario dreamily sings one of his old songs about a knight-errant. As the performance is now ended, the peasants and villagers leave the inn. Lothario slowly follows them, and the gipsies seek shelter under a neighbouring shed.

After exchanging a few inaudible remarks with Laertes, Filina goes back into the inn, while her companion trips down the outer stair-

MIGNON.

case to accost Guglielmo and congratulate him upon his chivalrous interference. He assures him of his own and Filina's admiration, and, introducing himself, gaily explains that he belongs to a company of actors stranded here, and anxiously awaiting a favourable turn of the wheel of fortune. Guglielmo receives this explanation with great courtesy, introduces himself, and invites Laertes to drink with him. When they are comfortably seated, he begins to question Laertes about the lovely Filina. Laertes disclaims being in love with his fair companion, whom he describes as vain and fickle, although remarkably pretty, — a description which Filina overhears, as she has again come out on her balcony. Thinking it high time to put an end to this conversation, the actress trips down the stairs, and playfully tapping Laertes' shoulder with her fan, dares him to continue his description. Guglielmo, more and more fascinated, assures Filina that it would be impossible to believe aught but good of her after having once seen her, and Filina, after thanking him for his compliment, remarks in an aside that she intends to spare no pains to make this youth her slave. While she is commenting thus, Laertes reflects that she is trying her wonted wiles, but the already smitten Guglielmo secretly admires her

beauty and coquettish glances. Their trio being ended, Filina gaily remarks that women are vain and flighty only because the men have made them so, and then, having made the two gentlemen laugh at this sally, she bows low while Laertes formally introduces Guglielmo. In the name of the somewhat embarrassed youth, and after a rapid aside to him, Laertes presents Mignon's flowers to Filina, and after a few more compliments and asides, both actors take their departure, leaving the young stranger alone in the yard. The young man is so fascinated by Filina's charms, and so determined to see more of her, that he starts violently when Mignon comes timidly forward. She begs permission to kiss the hand which saved her from the brutal treatment of the gipsy, who, she explains, is now fast asleep in the shed. The young man, touched by her gratitude, compassionately asks what she will do on the morrow, when he can no longer protect her. Mignon answers so gently, that he longs to help her, and inquires how she came into the gipsy's power. She artlessly replies that her mother fell asleep long ago, and that her first master sold her to her present employer.

Her beauty and innate refinement make Guglielmo conjecture that she must be a stolen

child, and he urges her to tell him all she remembers so he can help her find her home. She says that once, when she was a little girl, she was running along the banks of a beautiful lake, when some bronzed-faced men suddenly sprang out of the bushes and carried her away. This account convinces Guglielmo that he is right, and he eagerly inquires if she has no recollection of the past. Sweet memories now return to the poor girl, and she passionately asks him if he knows a land where the skies are always blue, the breezes balmy, and where flowering orange-trees cluster around a stately marble hall. The remembrance of such a place has long haunted her even in dreams, and she tells him that she would fain live, love, and die in such an enchanted spot. Guglielmo, having listened with breathless interest, suggests that Italy is just such a place as she describes, and wonders how he could help her find her parents and home. He is thinking of this when Giarno rushes furiously out of the shed, saying he must have taken a great fancy to the girl, as he is evidently trying to entice her away from him.

Guglielmo indignantly silences him, but when the gipsy insinuatingly offers to sell Mignon for the price he paid for her, the young man joyfully accepts, and follows him under the shed to con-

clude the bargain which will free poor Mignon from his tyranny.

The girl is so happy at the mere thought of escaping her thraldom, that she rushes to meet the approaching minstrel. He tells her he is about to follow the swallows southward and that he has come to bid her farewell. Mignon, happy at the thought of being able to choose her own road, now proposes to accompany him, and seizing his harp, sings about the light-winged swallows, and rouses his admiration by her skilful handling of his instrument. But Filina's gay laughter is suddenly heard without, so Mignon, with every sign of violent dislike, hastily takes refuge under a pent-house, dragging Lothario there with her.

They have scarcely left the scene when Filina appears with Frederic, one of her numerous admirers, whom she ridicules because he killed a horse in his efforts to reach her sooner. Offended by her laughter, Frederic turns to leave her, but she mockingly calls after him that he will soon come back, as Guglielmo and the gipsy come out of the shed, having satisfactorily concluded their business.

Filina, overhearing their last words, approaches Guglielmo, and inquires whether he has really purchased Mignon, while the gipsy chief

returns to his couch, congratulating himself upon having made a very good bargain. As soon as Frederic perceives that Filina is talking to a young and handsome man, he immediately comes back, wondering jealously who her new admirer may be. Filina gaily introduces them, giving Frederic the character of a hot-headed youth, and explaining that he need not be jealous of Guglielmo, as the latter has vowed not to fall victim to her charms. Led on by her coquettish glances, Guglielmo protests that he has made no such a promise, and they two begin a lively flirtation, while Frederic looks on in jealous silence. They are still standing there together, when a voice is heard loudly calling Filina, and Laertes comes hurriedly forward. He is surprised to find Frederic, but greets him cordially, and when Filina explains that he killed a horse to overtake them sooner, dramatically exclaims: "Poor beast!" As the young man seems inclined to think the term applied to him and not to his horse, Laertes hastens to apologise, and hands Filina a letter. The missive is from Baron Rosemberg, Frederic's uncle, and it invites the actors to come to his castle to give a performance for the entertainment of a noble guest. The actors congratulate themselves upon this happy change in their fortunes, but the young

man wonders at the strange coincidence. Filina, elated at the thought of coming triumphs, avails herself of the baron's permission to bring any guests she pleases, to invite Guglielmo to accompany her thither. This rouses the jealousy of Frederic, who is told he can find the way thither by himself, if he persists in following her as usual. This cold dismissal drives Frederic almost to despair, and when Filina goes away to prepare for her journey, Laertes, after watching Frederic rush off the stage in a passion, advises Guglielmo to retreat while it is yet time, and not listen to the coquette, who will lead him on only to make him miserable.

In spite of this sage advice, Guglielmo determines to accompany Filina, when Mignon advancing bids him now dispose of her since she belongs to him. The young man urges her not to relinquish the freedom she has secured, but although he offers to find a home for her, she passionately begs leave to follow and serve him. The young man tries to explain that she cannot go with him, but he finally concludes that it might be better for her to let her do as she wishes, than to expose her to all the trials of a wandering life with Lothario, which is the only other alternative that Mignon will consider. Although the old minstrel is anxious to have her go with

him, she refuses to leave Guglielmo, whom she is going to accompany disguised as a page.

Lothario, who has taken a strange fancy to Mignon, now wanders away disconsolately, to resume his weary quest for his long-lost child.

The next scene represents the departure of the actors, who are joyfully setting out for Baron Rosemberg's castle, where triumphs await them. Filina and Laertes, who are going in the baron's carriage, bid them good-bye, and the former coquettishly invites Guglielmo to drive with her. He reluctantly excuses himself, promising to join her as soon as possible, and she bids him farewell, showing him that she is wearing the flowers he gave her.

Mignon, coming out from the shed, bundle in hand, mournfully reproaches Guglielmo for giving away her flowers, and only resumes her serenity when he assures her that they were taken from him. She now bids good-bye to her gipsy companions, speaking a few kind words to each, and distributing her poor gifts among them. As the curtain falls, actors and gipsies leave the inn, gaily singing a farewell song.

The second act shows a luxurious boudoir, where Filina is coquettishly putting the finishing touches to her toilet and congratulating her-

self upon having made the conquest of a rich young man like Guglielmo. Laertes is equally well pleased with their prospects, and he is discussing their future plans, when Guglielmo comes in to pay his respects to Filina. Perceiving that his presence can easily be dispensed with, Laertes briefly informs the young man that as they are going to give Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," he must make his final arrangements. As he opens the door, he finds himself face to face with a slender young page, whom Guglielmo introduces as Mignon. Receiving Filina's gracious permission to remain here and warm herself by her fire, Mignon allows her master to place her in a large arm-chair. He is so solicitous about her comfort, that Filina makes fun of him, until he turns away from the shivering page and offers to wait upon her. At her request, he holds the light while she arranges her hair, and she soon makes him forget poor Mignon, and join her in a gay duet, where he expresses all his admiration, while she acknowledges that compliments are ever grateful to her ear. Mignon, in the mean time, feigns sleep, but she cannot help a few jealous movements when Guglielmo, growing bolder, confesses his love, and gallantly kisses the hand which Filina stretches out to

him. Filina perceives Mignon's anguish, and not averse to make another suffer, coquets with Guglielmo until he leads her out of the room.

Left alone, Mignon examines her surroundings, and seeing that her master has already forgotten her for the sake of another, determines to make the best of it. To distract her thoughts, she goes to the toilet table, and imitating Filina, puts rouge upon her cheeks. The effect is so pleasing, that she begins singing a gay gipsy song, interrupting herself from time to time to admire the result of her efforts. Then, thinking she may find in the next room one of the wonderful toilets which serve to enhance Filina's charms, Mignon leaves the apartment, determined to see how such garments would look upon her.

A few moments after her departure, Frederic comes in through the window. He gazes around him, wonders at the transformation of his aunt's room, and declares that Filina must accept him this very day. Just then a voice is heard calling "Mignon," and before Frederic can beat a retreat, Guglielmo steps into the room. The young men greet each other coldly, and in answer to their respective questions how they came here, Frederic is forced to acknowledge that he entered through the window, while his

happier rival boasts that *he* came in by the door. As both claim to be special friends of Filina, they soon begin to quarrel, and Frederic, drawing his sword, compels Guglielmo to defend himself, although the latter remarks that the time and place are hardly suitable for an encounter.

Just as they are about to cross weapons, a door flies open, and Mignon rushes between them, all decked out in one of Filina's gowns. The young men, equally surprised at the apparition, sheathe their swords, and, after mockingly commenting upon the fact of Mignon's wearing Filina's clothes, Frederic retires, promising to meet his rival at a more convenient time.

Left alone with Mignon, Guglielmo demands an explanation of her conduct, and she, hoping to disarm his anger, tells him she had not intended to show herself in this array. Feeling that his courage will fail if he does not act promptly, Guglielmo now announces that he came back to tell Mignon that they must part. Then, in spite of her tears, he bids her a tender farewell, resisting all her pleading to remain with him. Mignon, seeing she must go, refuses his proffered gifts and consolations, and vowing she will don her gipsy rags, prepares to leave him. Just then, however, Filina comes in, and seeing Mignon all dressed up in her

clothes, contemptuously offers to give her the garments if they please her. Angered by her laughter, Mignon tears the ribbons off the gown, and then rushes away to take it off, while Filina mockingly declares she must be jealous or she would not act so. Guglielmo, startled at the thought of Mignon's being jealous, has no time to inquire what Filina may mean, for Laertes now comes upon the scene, dressed as an ancient Greek, to invite them to follow him, for the performance is about to begin. As they leave the scene, Guglielmo escorting Filina, Frederic and Mignon peer forth from opposite doors, and hurl revengeful glances after their respective foes.

The next scene represents a portion of the park, near the baron's castle. From the brightly illumined conservatory in the distance come sounds of music and rapturous applause. Mignon, advancing alone through the trees, casts vindictive glances at the place where Filina is so happy with Guglielmo, while she wanders here disconsolate. Since she has heard him confess his love for Filina, life seems utterly worthless, and, catching a glimpse of the lake, she rushes toward it to commit suicide. But before she can accomplish her purpose, she hears sounds of coming footsteps, and peering through

the green, sees Lothario. He does not at first recognise Mignon, and is for a moment deluded into the belief that he beholds the object of his long quest. But learning it is the gipsy maid, he is almost as glad to find her, and inquires why she appears so sad. In heart-rending accents Mignon asks him whether he ever felt the bitter pangs of sorrow, and he sadly confesses that they have been his constant portion for many years. Their pathetic song is scarcely ended, when rapturous clapping again breaks the evening silence. Mignon vehemently wishes that fire would consume the scene of her rival's triumphs, and then rushes away.

The bewildered and half-crazed Lothario dreamily repeats the word "fire," and vanishes in the darkness, as the conservatory doors are flung open and a brilliant company step out into the cool night. All are enthusiastic in their praise of Filina, who, intoxicated with applause, gaily prides herself on being Titania, queen of the fairies, and mistress of all hearts, while she waves her golden sceptre and proudly exhibits her trophies. The chorus warmly extol her, and all the actors walk about among the trees, the sole light being furnished by the torches held by the baron's lackeys.

Filina now accosts Guglielmo, whose glances have been wandering around in search of some one. To Frederic's great displeasure, she monopolises the young man's attention, but pays no heed when he explains that he was looking for Mignon. Forced to listen to her, Guglielmo promenades up and down with her, while Lothario and Mignon, coming from opposite directions, meet in the centre of the scene. The old minstrel tells the girl that her wishes are fulfilled, for flames are even now consuming the building she doomed to destruction. Mignon does not, at first, know whether to take these words literally, but her attention is soon distracted by the reappearance of Guglielmo and Filina. The young man eagerly advances, saying he has anxiously sought her, and Filina, wishing to get rid of her, sends her in quest of the little bunch of flowers which she had given Guglielmo, and which had fallen from the actress's bodice on the conservatory stage.

Mignon has scarcely departed, when Filina suddenly points out to the guests that the conservatory is on fire, and the alarm being given, the servants hurry away with their torches, leaving the stage in complete darkness. The lurid gleam of the conflagration soon scatters

the gloom, and Guglielmo, fearing for Mignon's safety, dashes into the fire in spite of Filina's frantic efforts to hold him back. The chorus declare that this is sheer madness, for the flames are raging so fiercely that there is no hope of checking them. All are trembling with apprehension, except the minstrel, who shows no consciousness of the excitement around him, but wanders across the stage singing a plaintive song, in which he says he will resume his weary search for his beloved child. The conservatory falls in with a crash, and just when the awe-struck spectators imagine that Mignon and her master have perished, Guglielmo returns, carrying the unconscious maiden, whom he has snatched from the flames. All shout for joy as he gently lays her down on a bank, and then one can see that she is tightly clasping the wilted flowers which have nearly cost her her life.

The next act shows the gallery of a beautiful villa on the shore of one of the Italian lakes. Through open windows, charming glimpses of southern landscapes are seen, and the tones of a merry boat-song come floating in on the balmy breeze. At first the hall is deserted, but Lothario soon comes in, and sings how he soothed Mignon when she was delirious, and nursed her back to life. The poor girl has been brought

thither to recover her strength, and as her eyes have just closed in refreshing slumber, he thinks she will soon be well. Guglielmo is now ushered into the hall by the villa care-taker, who explains that the house has long been deserted. The young man answers that he was told that the owner's child, wandering out alone, was drowned in the lake. The care-taker sadly adds that the accident killed the little girl's mother, and that the father, crazed by grief, suddenly left the place. Now, many years after these tragic events, the house is offered for sale. Guglielmo, who is contemplating its purchase, dismisses the man, promising to give him a definite answer on the morrow, and, turning to Lothario, asks news of Mignon. When he hears that the fever has left her, and that she is slumbering peacefully, he declares he will purchase for her use the villa Cipriani. At the sound of this name, Lothario starts violently, gazes wonderingly about him, tries to open a long-closed door, and, without paying any heed to Guglielmo's questions, staggers slowly out of the room. His strange behaviour causes Guglielmo only a passing surprise, however, for the young man can think only of Mignon. During her fever, he has discovered that she loves him; but since then, he has vainly tried

to make her confess that sweet secret. A few moments later, the care-taker brings him a letter from Laertes, bidding him be on his guard, for Filina the arch-coquette is on his track. This news troubles Guglielmo, because he fears it may cause anxiety to Mignon. He runs to her door, and eagerly listens to discover whether she is still asleep. Suddenly the door opens, and she feebly comes forward, commenting rapturously on the balmy air, and the blue skies so clearly mirrored in the placid waters, over which white sails are skimming. The scene and house seem strangely familiar to her, and in her bewilderment she calls aloud for Lothario and Guglielmo, who have lately never been far from her side. Guglielmo hastens to her, and resting in his arms she tells him of her happiness, which fills his heart with rapture. He answers that she will soon be well, and assures her that a long and blissful life awaits her. This duet is a charming part of the opera, and after much coaxing on Guglielmo's part, Mignon is about to confess she loves him, when Filina's gay voice outside startles her from his embrace, and makes her resolve to keep her secret.

The shock has been too much for her feeble frame, and sinking upon a neighbouring seat, she loses consciousness. Guglielmo makes every

effort to restore her, and as soon as she comes to her senses again, assures her that it was nothing but a bad dream, and that she need no longer fear Filina. The disconsolate Mignon refuses to believe him, and calls for Lothario, whose step she says she hears in the next room. A moment later Lothario comes out of the long-closed door, clad in black velvet, and carrying a small coffer. His changed appearance amazes Mignon and Guglielmo, and they are still more surprised when he tells them that his name is Cipriani, and welcomes them both to the house he left so many years ago in quest of his lost child. He next bids Mignon open the box, which has been untouched for years, and which contains his dearest treasures, things used by his loved Sperata. At that name, Mignon starts, for it calls up dormant memories, but she opens the coffer at his request, and draws from it a child's girdle, and a coral bracelet. The latter is too small for her, but the old man tenderly says it was far too large for his lost darling. Lastly, Mignon takes out of the box a small prayer-book, and begins reading aloud a prayer which Lothario says Sperata repeated daily at nightfall. As if under the influence of a spell, Mignon sinks upon her knees, and clasping her hands, finishes the petition which, long unspoken, still lingers

in the recesses of her memory, and proves her to be the long-lost Sperata.

Lothario gazes at her with tender emotion at first, but when she reaches the end of the prayer, he is amazed and wonders what it may mean. Mignon, instead of answering him, rushes into the next room, and soon comes back, saying that although her mother's portrait still hangs there, the apartment has a deserted, comfortless appearance. At these words Lothario rushes forward, clasps her to his heart, and gives thanks for the recovery of his child.

Guglielmo rejoices at the sight of their happiness, which quite overcomes Mignon at last, and makes her turn faint. Supported by her father and lover, she soon recovers consciousness, and hearing Guglielmo declare he cannot live without her, she confesses that she loves him and that she only longs to live, to love, and to die in this enchanted spot. There is no question of dying yet, however, for Guglielmo and Lothario both assure her that a long and happy life awaits her.

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO.

BESIDES "Don Giovanni," of which a sketch has already been given in this book, Mozart wrote two other well-known operas. The "Magic Flute," his last work for the stage, was so successful that it made the fortune of Schickadener, although the composer's family was not benefited by it in any way. The "Marriage of Figaro," or "Le Nozze di Figaro," is Mozart's most popular opera. Written in six weeks, this charming work was nearly destroyed by the composer, when he discovered that there were intrigues afoot to prevent his producing it before the works of two rivals, whose names are now almost unknown. Aware that Mozart, who "was as touchy as gunpowder," would not yield, the director made the necessary preparations for the production of "Figaro," which met with instantaneous and complete success. The audience enthusiastically applauded actors and composer, and the encores were so frequent that they had to be forbidden by imperial decree. After being

played in Vienna for the first time in 1776, the opera was so warmly welcomed at Prague, that Mozart wrote to a friend, "the one subject of conversation here is — 'Figaro;' nothing is played, sung, or whistled but — 'Figaro;' nobody goes to any opera but — 'Figaro;' everlastingly 'Figaro'!" The libretto of this famous work is based on Beaumarchais's play of the same name, and was arranged by Da Ponte under Mozart's directions. The French version is the work of Messrs. Carré and Barbier, many of Beaumarchais's sentences being introduced without any change. Although very amusing, the libretto is very complicated, and rather ill constructed, besides being so long that frequent cuts are made when it is to be played in a short time. The play runs as follows: —

In a scantily furnished room in the house of Count Almaviva, the valet Figaro is measuring with a foot rule, while Susanna, the maid, is trying on one of her mistress's hats. Both are absorbed in their occupations, but Figaro finally looks up to express his approval of Susanna's head-gear, and she joins him in happy anticipations of their coming wedding.

In answer to a question of Susanna's, Figaro says he is measuring the room the count has so kindly reserved for their use, so as to ascertain

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where their furniture can be placed to the best advantage. Then, somewhat surprised because Susanna does not join him in praising their generous master, he demonstrates how easy it will be to answer the count or countess's bell. But she ironically suggests that some day, when he has been called away by the ringing of that self-same bell, the count may come here in quest of her. As Figaro shows some signs of jealousy, she promptly assures him he has no cause to suspect her, but adds that as the count has elected to fall in love with her, it behooves them both to be wary if they would outwit him.

The countess's bell ringing at this juncture, Susanna goes away, telling her lover to devise some clever plan. When he is left alone Figaro says that he now understands why the count was so anxious to start for London with them, immediately after their marriage, pretending a secret embassy, and saying that Susanna should assume the rôle of ambassadress on the journey. Having discovered the count's intentions, Figaro gaily promises to lead him a merry dance, and to teach him a trick or two to punish him for trying to flirt with Susanna.

In the next scene Bartolo, a lawyer, is in close confabulation with his old housekeeper Marcellina. She shows him a paper signed by Figaro,

wherein he pledges himself to marry her, if he cannot repay the money he borrowed at a certain date. She knows that he means to use the dowry which the count has promised Susanna to acquit his debt, but, as she wishes to marry the valet herself, she thinks the best way to keep him to his bond will be to make Susanna repulse the count, who, in that case, will not give the promised dowry.

Bartolo, discarded by Susanna, is delighted with the plan, and promises his help, for he longs to triumph over Figaro. As he goes out of the room, Susanna comes in, carrying a dress and cap. The two women are so jealous that they pretend not to see each other at first, but indulge in sarcastic side remarks. From these they soon pass to ill-natured compliments, and bitter-sweet civilities.

Marcellina having left the room in high dudgeon, Susanna pettishly flings her mistress's wrapper on a chair. Just then, the page Cherubino thrusts his head in at the door, and ascertaining that she is alone, steps in. He says that the count, having caught him with the pretty maid Barberina, has dismissed him ; and adds that unless the countess intercedes for him he will soon have to part from his beloved Susanna. At this remark Susanna asks the im-

pressionable youth whether he no longer loves the countess, his first flame, and the page soon demonstrates his fidelity by stealing a ribbon which Susanna declares has been worn by her mistress. In spite of her entreaties he refuses to give it back, but finally tenders a song of his own composition in exchange. Then he goes on to explain that he does not know what can be the matter with him, as the mere sight of a woman is enough to make him either flush or grow pale, and his heart is full of tender emotions which he confides to the winds and waves, and which will end by killing him if some one does not take pity upon him. Before Susanna can answer this pathetic complaint, sounds are heard without, so Cherubino hastily hides behind the chair as the count comes into the room.

Deliberately seating himself in the chair behind which Cherubino is hiding, the count, who fancies that Susanna's confusion is caused by pleasure at his appearance, obstinately refuses to go away, until she promises to meet him in the orange grove at twilight. Just then the voice of Basilio is heard outside, saying he will inquire if the count is with his wife, and as his footsteps draw near the apartment the count hastily looks around him for a place of concealment. As he selects the very spot where

Cherubino is crouching, Susanna gets between him and the page, and spreads out her dress so as to conceal the motions of the latter, who deftly slips into the vacant chair. Flinging the countess's wrapper over Cherubino, Susanna turns to receive Basilio, who says that Figaro is looking for the count. Then he goes on to explain that he is well aware of the count's infatuation for Susanna, and adds that as Cherubino confides in her, she should warn him not to cast sheep's eyes at the countess in her husband's presence, as the latter is of a notoriously jealous temperament.

These remarks, which Susanna vainly tries to check, rouse the anger of the count, who, springing up from behind the chair, angrily cries that the page must be driven out of the house. To create a diversion and check the torrent of his wrath, Susanna pretends to faint at these words, but she recovers very rapidly when they seem inclined to place her in the chair where Cherubino is hiding. To reassure her, Basilio insists that all he said about the page was malicious gossip, but the count, sharing Basilio's delusion that Susanna loves Cherubino, and hoping to disenchant her, relates how he found the page hiding in Marcellina's room that very morning. To illustrate his narrative,

he lifts his wife's wrapper, — as he did the table-spread in Marcellina's apartment, — and, to his intense amazement, discovers the very lad he is talking about.

To disarm his anger, Susanna now describes how they exchanged places in the chair, and this explanation is scarcely ended when Figaro comes in, with a deputation of peasants, who bring flowers to the count to thank him for giving them a holiday. He receives them graciously, then, their chorus being ended, dismisses them, and turning to Cherubino bids him ride off and join a regiment, in which he gives him a commission. Susanna and Figaro plead to have Cherubino remain for their wedding festivities, but the count insists upon his immediate departure, and leaves the room with Basilio to prepare his commission. Figaro now bids the page good-bye, and says that instead of leading the life of a butterfly and wearing dainty garments, he will have to don an unbecoming uniform, and go where honour and glory await him. This song of Figaro, which never fails to win great applause, closes the scene, and when the curtain again rises we behold the countess alone in her boudoir. She is sadly wondering how she can recover her former monopoly of her husband's heart, for

Susanna has loyally been telling her all that has occurred. As the maid comes into the room again, the countess inquires whether she has really revealed all, and is secretly pleased when Susanna tells her that the count is so jealous of her, that they must take advantage of that passion to punish him for past offences, and to recall him to a sense of duty.

Figaro, coming in just then, singing a merry song, is called upon to explain his plot. After excusing himself for his apparent lack of decorum, he says that he has written an anonymous letter to the count, warning him that his wife has made a secret appointment to meet her lover in the garden that very evening. The countess is horrified, but Figaro goes on to say that instead of his wife, the count will find old Marcellina at the trysting spot. As Cherubino has not yet gone, they will dress him up in woman's clothes, and lure the count into the garden to meet him, instead of Susanna, with whom he wishes an interview. The plan meets with the half-hearted approval of the countess and Susanna, who engage to dress Cherubino for his part. Figaro goes out of the room, promising to send the page to them, and still singing the merry song, in which he promises to play the fiddle for his master's dancing.

A few minutes after his exit, Cherubino appears, and after receiving Susanna's mock congratulations upon his commission, somewhat sullenly yields to the countess's entreaties and sings the song he composed. In it, he asks all women, who are skilled in the ways of love, to tell him whether the varying emotions to which he is a prey are symptoms of the tender passion. He has barely finished describing his sensations, when Susanna begins to examine him to see how she can best disguise him. Measuring herself against him, she discovers that as they are nearly the same height one of her dresses will answer the purpose. At the countess's suggestion, she locks the door to guard against detection, and goes into the adjoining room to find a suitable head-dress. During her brief absence the countess examines the commission which Cherubino has just received, and to which the count has forgotten to affix the usual seal.

Susanna soon returns with the necessary articles, and making Cherubino kneel down before her, she deftly adjusts the curls around his face, complimenting him upon his girlish appearance and giving him the necessary instructions concerning his behaviour. Then she puts one of her own dresses upon him, tucking up his sleeves to show his bare arms. In doing this the coun-

tess perceives a ribbon tied around the youth's arm, and when she asks what it means, he answers in such a shamefaced way, that she discovers the ribbon is hers and demands its restitution.

Before Cherubino can obey, and while Susanna is in the next room, hiding his discarded garments, a loud knocking is heard, and the count sternly demands admittance. The countess is dismayed, and answers so timorously that the count imagines she is hiding something from him, and grows more and more angry at her delay in letting him in. Cherubino, fearing discovery, runs and hides in a closet, and as soon as the countess has removed the key, she unlocks the door for her irate spouse.

Coming in, the count looks suspiciously around him, asks with whom she was talking, and showing her the anonymous letter, received from Figaro, jealously accuses her of trying to deceive him. At that moment Cherubino awkwardly knocks down something in the closet, and the noise, added to the countess's evident confusion, makes the count more and more imperious in his demands for the closet key, which his wife obstinately withholds. The countess first tries to make him believe it is Susanna, but as she does not appear at his call, he vows he will

break open the door. As he has no instrument handy, and does not want to expose his wife before the servants, he makes her accompany him, and locking the door behind him, goes in quest of a tool. As soon as they have gone, Susanna rushes out from the adjoining apartment, where she has been listening intently to their dispute, and opening the closet door implores Cherubino to escape or the count will kill him. As the door is locked, the page, after some hesitation, springs on the window sill, and snatching a kiss from Susanna, jumps down into a flower-bed. He breaks a few blossoms in his fall, and then scampers off across the garden. After watching him safely out of sight, Susanna shuts herself into the closet, and a few minutes later the count returns, carrying a crowbar and still disputing with his wife. She resorts to coaxing, then indignantly asks him whether he dare suspect her; but still refuses either to open the closet door or let him go near it. Finally, seeing she cannot hold him back much longer, she wildly implores him not to harm a young creature, who is quite innocent of any wrong-doing, in spite of strange attire and bare arms.

These words only serve to incense the count still more, and seeing he will break open the door if she does not yield, the countess now

gives him the key. As he flings the door open, Susanna steps out, to the amazement of both count and countess, ironically suggesting that her master ransack the place, lest some suspicious character be lurking there. The count, who fully expected to find Cherubino, goes into the closet to make sure he is not there, and during his brief search, Susanna urges her mistress to complete his mystification by putting a bold face on the matter. When the count reappears, therefore, both women berate him, until he is duly humbled, and repeatedly begs his wife's forgiveness. The countess graciously consents to overlook his discourteous behaviour, and when their reconciliation is accomplished, the count tries to discover why she made him believe that Cherubino was hiding there in disguise, but she laughingly assures him it was all a joke.

Figaro now enters to announce that the musicians have come, and the count, detaining him, asks whether he knows the writer of the letter he shows him. Figaro denies all knowledge of it, although the count, his wife, and Susanna, all three, urge him to speak without fear. But he suggests that as they have evidently been playing some farce, it is now high time to finish it, in the usual way, by a wedding. They are about to leave the room, when Anto-

nio the gardener comes in, half tipsy and carrying a pot of damaged flowers. From his confused statements, the count finally discovers that a man, jumping out of the window, played havoc among his flowers. As the gardener sticks to this story, in spite of violent efforts made by the countess and Susanna to silence him, Figaro deems it is time to interfere. Following the clues furnished by his accomplices, in rapid asides, he acknowledges that he came to visit Susanna, and that in jumping out of the window he broke a few flower-pots and sprained his ankle. To prove this latter assertion, he suddenly begins to limp, and the count seems nearly convinced of the truth of his story, when Antonio tenders a paper, saying he dropped it among the flowers. Before Figaro can see what it is, the count confiscates it, and calls upon him to say what it contains, if he would have them believe his story. Figaro examines the papers in his pocket to gain time, and, the women having peeped over the count's shoulder and furnished him a clue, he soon declares that it must be Cherubino's commission, which he was bringing back to the count to have properly sealed. These explanations sound so plausible that the count, although still suspicious, cannot cavil at them any longer. He is just

wondering how he can delay Figaro's marriage, when Marcellina enters the room, accompanied by Bartolo and Basilio. She comes in demanding justice, and shows the contract whereby Figaro is bound either to pay or marry her. The countess, Susanna, and Figaro are all dismayed at this new obstacle, but the count gravely answers that he will consider the matter, and the curtain falls while the actors express their various emotions in a concerted finale.

In the next scene, we find the count alone in his study, vainly trying to unravel the mystery which baffles him. Susanna enters timidly, under pretext of getting her mistress's vinaigrette, but allows herself to be detained by the count, who tells her she must renounce all hope of marrying Figaro, unless she will consent to do as he wishes, and meet him in the garden that very evening. She finally promises to do so, and he goes away as Figaro comes in. In her delight at having thus secured the money which will free Figaro from Marcellina's claims, Susanna forgets all caution, and speaks so loud that the count catches a few words, which rouse his suspicions. Suspecting some treachery, he resolves to force Figaro into an immediate marriage with Marcellina, and thus prevent his

interfering in Susanna's affairs. A few moments later, Marcellina appears with Bartolo, Basilio, and Figaro, and the count gravely tells them that, after due examination, he finds that Figaro must fulfil either part of his contract without delay. As Figaro lacks the necessary money, but does not wish to marry Marcellina, he tries to gain time by assuring the count that he cannot marry without his parents' consent. He adds that he was stolen in early childhood, and that as he dimly remembers a beautiful castle and flashing jewels, he must evidently be the offspring of noble parents. He cannot produce any other proofs by which he might be identified, so he shows a birth-mark on his arm, and thus Marcellina recognises him as her long-lost son, and tells him that Bartolo is his father. They have scarcely finished embracing each other, when Susanna comes upon the scene, bringing a purse full of gold, which she hands to Figaro, bidding him purchase his liberty. Seeing him in Marcellina's arms, she is about to depart in anger, thinking he has proved faithless, when the whole situation is explained to her. She, too, is gladly embraced by Marcellina and Bartolo, who are now very glad to secure such a charming wife for their son. The only persons not pleased with the

outcome of the affair are the count and his lawyer, who withdraw. Figaro gladly accepts the purses which Bartolo and Susanna thrust upon him, with the receipt his mother gives him instead of a marriage portion. When they have gone, the countess comes in, looking for Susanna, and still regretting that she must resort to a subterfuge to win back her fickle husband. As she passes out of the room, the count comes in with Antonio, who brings Cherubino's hat, and reports that the youth is sitting with Barberina, although he is all decked out in woman's clothes. Both men now sally forth to catch the youth, and the countess, coming in with Susanna, makes her write a letter to the count, appointing the place and hour of their meeting. This missive is fastened by a needle, which the count is directed to send back as a token of agreement. They have scarcely finished writing this epistle, when a troop of village girls come in, to offer flowers to the countess. Among them is the page in disguise, and, although he is not recognised by the countess, he is promptly unmasked by Antonio, who tears off his head-dress and claps the hat he picked up on the youth's head. Figaro, coming in, calls the girls to come and dance, and notwithstanding his sprained ankle, leads

the peasants away to take part in the festivities. The count and countess, left alone together, have barely time to prepare to receive the wedding party, who come marching in. While Susanna kneels before the count to receive the customary wedding veil and gloves, she manages to slip into his hand the note she has written. As soon as he can do so, the count reads it, and having discovered that the needle which sealed it, and which he carelessly dropped, is of importance, he hunts for it until he finds it. These actions are all noted by Figaro, who in the mean time is standing near Susanna, watching the merry dance of the wedding guests. As the peasants leave the hall to partake of the refreshments provided for them, they merrily sing the bridal chorus.

The next scene is played in a smaller room, where Barberina is diligently searching for a needle which she has dropped, and which the count bade her carry to Susanna. Figaro, coming in, hears of her strange errand and loss, and when she runs away with the recovered needle, he betakes himself to the garden to waylay and punish his bride, who is proving faithless a few moments after her wedding.

The next scene is played in the garden, where Figaro is lurking and singing that men should

take warning and keep close watch upon their wives, who are ever ready to deceive them. Hearing voices, he hides, and Susanna, the countess, and Marcellina come upon the scene. Owing to the darkness, he does not perceive that Susanna and the countess have changed garments, nor does he suspect that they are aware of his presence there. To torment him, Susanna sings a tender love-song, while the countess and Marcellina take refuge in arbours on opposite sides of the stage. Susanna has scarcely finished singing, when Cherubino comes into the garden, and owing to the apparel, mistakes the countess for Susanna. As usual, he begins making love to her, and the count appearing suddenly, detects him trying to kiss a woman, whom he takes for Susanna. Quickly stepping forward, he receives the kiss intended for Susanna, and raising his hand, he deals a blow which is cleverly dodged by Cherubino, but which in the darkness alights upon the unlucky Figaro.

While Cherubino escapes into the pavilion, where Marcellina is hiding, the count, still labouring under a delusion, makes love to his own wife, and places upon her finger a diamond ring, as a mark of his favour. This performance is watched by Figaro and Susanna

from their respective hiding-places, and both comment upon it. Startled by the noise of Figaro's steps, the countess runs into the pavilion, while the count goes to reconnoitre. As soon as he has vanished, Susanna emerges from concealment; and although Figaro first mistakes her for the countess, he soon recognises her by her voice, and gladly accepts her explanation that she is there to help the countess punish her recreant husband. Figaro is only too ready to second her efforts; and when he hears the count coming back, he kneels before Susanna, addressing her as "Madam," and protesting his love for her. This declaration is overheard by the count, and it makes him so furious, that he loudly calls for lights and servants. When a host of people have crowded around him, he drags Cherubino, Marcellina, and the pretended Susanna out of the pavilion; and it is only when the real Susanna comes forward, in the countess's garments, that he discovers his mistake. Relieved at finding his wife above suspicion, and ashamed of his own shortcomings, the count now implores the countess's forgiveness; and that being granted, all join in a chorus, which celebrates the happy ending of a day full of excitement and heartburnings.

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA.

"CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA," or "Rustic Chivalry," is a melodrama in one act, by the young Italian composer, Mascagni. The popularity which this work enjoys, is mainly due to the music, which hitherto has never failed to draw large audiences. Whether the composition will continue to please when the novelty has worn off, is a question with some musicians, who predict that it will, in time, be supplanted by some other, greater work, of the same composer.

Mascagni was poor and unknown when he took part in a prize competition for a one-act opera. The manuscripts were to be sent to the music publisher, Sonsogno, who found that a number of the candidates had selected subjects from Verga's Sicilian sketches. Mascagni, who was too poor at the time to hire a piano, and whose family was literally starving, had selected one of these sketches for the libretto of his opera, and it was he who won the prize. "Cavalleria Rusticana" was played with great success; and since its first appearance, only a few years ago,

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it has gone all around the world. It has also earned for the composer a fortune which has placed him above all want.

The scene of this melodrama represents the market-place of a picturesque Sicilian village, with a church in the background, and an inn and cottage to the left. Easter morning has just dawned; and even before the curtain rises, Turiddu, the hero, is heard singing a serenade. His song is addressed to Lola, the girl who once plighted her troth to him, but who, during his term of military service, has broken her promise and married the carrier Alfio. She has, however, not proved the best of wives, for, taking advantage of her husband's utter confidence and frequent absences, she has renewed her former connection with Turiddu.

Deeply enamoured with her charms, the young soldier loudly praises Lola, saying she is fairer than the brier-rose, and that her lips have been kissed by the warm sun. She has such attractions for him, that, although he knows he is running a great risk, he cannot keep away from her; and he boldly avers that even if the gates of Paradise opened wide to receive him, he would not venture to enter were she not there to bid him welcome.

The curtain rises as his song comes to an end,

and peasants of both sexes and of all ages are seen hurrying to and fro across the scene. Their brilliant costumes form kaleidoscopic effects, and the scene grows more and more animated as the hour for the morning service draws near. When the bell rings and the church doors open, the people throng into the building.

Then the introductory chorus, sung by the men and women, falls upon one's ear. The women sing of the fragrant orange blossoms, and of the tuneful larks which proclaim the resurrection of nature, and awaken new and tender thoughts in every heart. As they come upon the stage, the men's voices begin singing of rest after toilsome labour, and of their constant allegiance to the bright-eyed girls, who are spinning at home, and to whose side they are ever ready to hasten.

While on the scene, the women urge that, the time for work being over, it is right to let one's thoughts dwell upon the Blessed Virgin's delight in the Saviour of the world, then they and the men slowly leave the stage, repeating their former strain.

The square is now deserted, for the main part of the population is at early mass. No one is in sight, as the peasant girl Santuzza rapidly crosses the stage. She comes to a pause before

Lucia's door, and hesitatingly calls her. Lucia, Turiddu's mother, comes forward, evidently surprised to see Santuzza, whom she addresses very coldly, asking her what she wants.

With suppressed emotion, the girl inquires where the young soldier may be, — a question which calls forth Lucia's open wonder at her boldness. But Santuzza is too unhappy to take offence at her tone; and when Lucia abruptly adds that she does not know where Turiddu may be found, she bursts into tears. Falling at Lucia's feet, she begs her to be as compassionate as the Saviour was to Mary Magdalene, and to answer her question. Then only Lucia tells her that Turiddu has gone to get wine at Francofonte. But Santuzza assures her that this cannot be true, for the young man has been seen in the village last night.

This news fills the mother's heart with dismay, for her son has not come home. Wishing to learn more, she invites Santuzza into her house, but the poor girl hangs her head, and sadly refuses, saying she has been excommunicated. Full of anxiety for her absent son, Lucia now tries to question Santuzza. But, before she can gain any further information from her, loud crackings of whip are heard, and amid jingling bells Alfio, the carter, comes upon the scene,

followed by a number of people. Gaily snapping his long whip, he sings of the merry music which tinkling bells and trampling hoofs are ever making as he journeys along under sunny or cloudy skies. Attracted by this merry din, the villagers crowd upon the scene, and soon the men join in the chorus, extolling the calling of a carrier. Then Alfio proceeds to relate how he is hastening home to celebrate Easter with his true and lovely wife, Lola. The women openly approve of him, ere they and the men pass into the church, or go about their business.

The only persons left upon the scene are the jolly carter and the two women. Lucia tells Alfio he is a fortunate fellow to be always in such good spirits ; and he, remembering many a pleasant draught of wine she has given him, insinuatingly inquires whether she has any of that vintage left. Flattered by his compliments, Lucia tells him that her son has gone away to replenish their supply, but the carter assures her that this can scarcely be, as he has seen the young man in the neighbourhood this very morning.

Lucia is about to express her surprise when Santuzza silences her ; and Alfio, seeing he will gain nothing by waiting any longer, goes away, leaving them free to betake themselves to church.

When he has departed, sounds of the priests'

chanting and the people's responses are clearly heard. New worshippers now hurry towards the church, or pause at the open door in reverent attitudes, and join in the Easter Carol in praise of the Risen Lord.

When all have gone in, and the sounds of the hymn have ceased, Lucia wonderingly asks Santuzza why she made her such frantic signs to be silent. Santuzza shamefacedly answers that Turiddu, finding that Lola had married another, began to make love to her, and won her heart. But when Lola perceived that he was about to forget her, she renewed her former coquetries, and, rekindling his slumbering passion, won him back to her side. Thus the faithless woman lured Turiddu away from his new sweetheart, and prevented his keeping his solemn promise to marry her.

Lucia, who has had no suspicion of her son's wrong-doing, is almost overcome when she hears these tidings, but Santuzza implores her to go into the church, — whose threshold the girl has not dared to cross since she became unworthy, — and there to pray for the recreant Turiddu and for her. In the mean time Santuzza will renew her search for her faithless lover, and try to recall him to a sense of duty. The poor mother gratefully follows this suggestion and

hurries into the church, fervently calling upon the Virgin for aid.

When she has gone, Turiddu appears, and openly expresses his surprise at meeting Santuzza. She explains that she has come here hoping to see him; and when he tries to avoid further conversation with her by asking if she is not going to church, she insists upon his hearing what she has to say. Gazing anxiously at him, she now bluntly asks where he has been; but when he tells her "to Francofonte," she answers that it is impossible, as he has been seen lurking near Lola's house last night. Turiddu is furious at the thought of her playing the spy upon him; and when she adds that Alfio reported seeing him in the neighbourhood, he wildly remarks that she will soon drive him to suicide.

His violent gestures, coupled with a surly request to be left alone to bear his sorrows, terrify poor Santuzza, who inquires why he loves the wicked woman who has taken him away from her? This question only serves to make Turiddu more angry still, so he answers her more and more impatiently as she goes on pleading with him.

Their quarrelsome duet is finally interrupted by the approach of Lola, who comes along, singing of the lily, whose whiteness and purity

outshine that of the heavenly spirits. Turiddu and Santuzza both start at the sound of her voice ; and when she perceives them she carelessly inquires whether her husband has gone by. Turiddu briefly answers that he does not know, for he has just come upon the scene himself, and Lola remarks that he has probably been detained at the blacksmith's. Then, with a malicious glance at Santuzza, Lola inquires whether they are attending service out-of-doors ?

Embarrassed by this query, Turiddu tries to explain that Santuzza was telling him something ; but she, interrupting him, pointedly remarks that she was reminding him that on Easter Day God took special notice of all that was going on upon earth.

Paying no apparent heed to this fling, Lola asks Santuzza if she is not going to church ? The latter bitterly answers that none but the innocent are worthy to enter its sacred portals. This remark irritates Turiddu, although Lola receives it with pretended humility. As she turns to enter the sacred edifice, he makes a movement as if to go with her ; but she bids him remain where he is, and trips away, ironically hoping that the Lord will be with him.

Left alone with Santuzza, Turiddu vents his anger upon her ; and in spite of her prayers and

entreaties to listen to her and forgive her, he repulses her roughly and bids her begone. Seeing she does not obey and still clings to him, he finally knocks her down, and hastens into the church to join Lola.

Santuzza curses him in her anger, but, gathering herself up, tries to appear very calm as Alfio comes upon the scene. She tells him the Lord must have sent him thither, and gradually informs him that while he is away, making an honest living, his wife is disgracing him by receiving her old lover, Turiddu. At first Alfio refuses to believe Santuzza, but finally he is convinced that she has told him the truth. With forced calmness he thanks her for her information, and then, no longer able to restrain his anger, passionately exclaims that the insult will be avenged before sunset. Santuzza now regrets having spoken, but it is too late, so she leaves the scene as the curtain falls.

After a beautiful musical intermezzo, the people are seen streaming out of church. Lucia, heeding no one, passes rapidly across the square and enters her house, but the majority of the worshippers linger around, exchanging remarks and forming small groups. The men sing that it is time to go home and celebrate the festival with their faithful helpmates, — a theme which the

women take up, while Lola and Turiddu come out of the church together. The young soldier asks his companion whether she is going home without stopping to speak to him, and she answers that she cannot tarry, as she has not yet seen her husband.

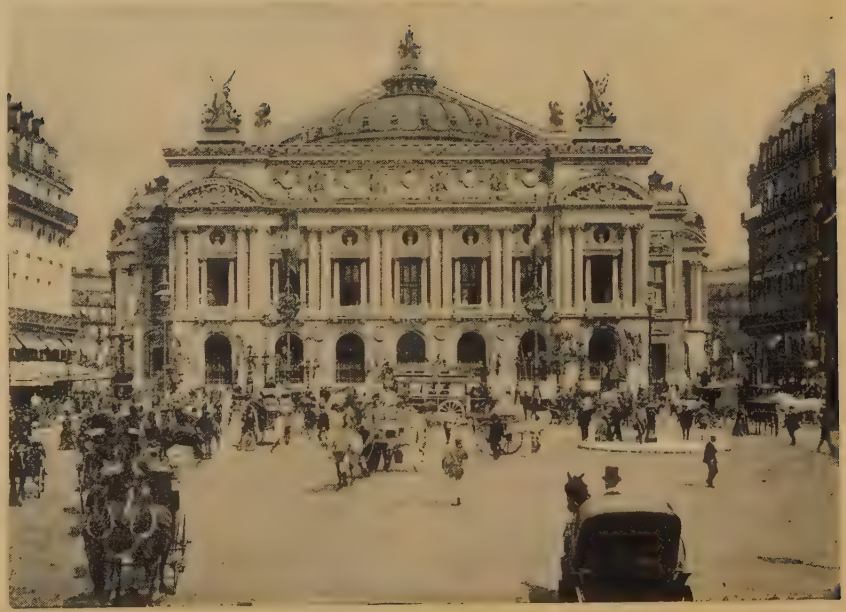
Hoping to detain her a little longer, Turiddu assures her that Alfio must soon appear, and begs her and all the bystanders to drink a glass of wine with him. They gladly accept this invitation, and, drawing around the inn tables, begin to drink, while Turiddu sings a song in praise of wine, in which they all promptly join him. He and Lola have just pledged each other, when Alfio appears ; and when the soldier offers him a glass of wine he scornfully refuses it, saying that wine from Turiddu's hands would turn to poison. This answer, and especially the look and tone which accompany it, frighten the women, who, after whispering together for a few moments, ask Lola to come away with them, and depart, leaving the men alone upon the scene.

Now that no women are present, Turiddu turns towards Alfio, haughtily inquiring whether he has anything more to say. Next, he challenges him to fight a duel, by biting his right ear, — the ancient Sicilian custom. An immediate

meeting is arranged; but Turiddu, feeling he is in the wrong, vows that although he knows he deserves death, he must do his best to live for the sake of poor Santuzza, whom he is bound to marry.

Bidding his antagonist meet him in the orchard, Alfio goes away. Turiddu then calls his mother, and asks her to give him her blessing, as she did when he left her to join the army. Alarmed by his strange manner and request, Lucia asks what is troubling him; but he refuses to answer, and, after begging her to be kind to Santuzza, rushes away, in spite of her efforts to detain him.

The anxious mother is still on the square, watching for her son's return, when Santuzza runs forward, and wildly flings her arms around her neck. They are standing thus, when the peasants come back, exchanging anxious remarks and nervously listening to confused sounds in the background. Suddenly a voice is heard crying, "Neighbour Turiddu is murdered!" and a few minutes later a woman rushes upon the scene repeating these ominous words. The chorus are horror-struck at these tidings, and Santuzza and Lucia both faint away, as the curtain falls upon this village tragedy.



PARIS OPERA HOUSE.

LE CID.

THE French composer Massenet has risen from a very humble station to such prominence, that he has been called "a spoiled child of fortune." Hitherto, his operas of "Manon" and "Werther" have been accounted his finest works, although the general public prefer "Le Cid," which is based on Corneille's tragedy of the same name. The opera differs in many respects from the great French classic, but Messrs. D'Ennery, Gallet, and Blau have cleverly incorporated many of the poet's fine lines into their libretto. Played for the first time in Paris, in 1885, Massenet's "Cid" proved so acceptable, that it has since been frequently given, and has won much applause, although the music is more pleasing than dramatic. The trend of the play is so different from the story of the Cid, as it has come down to us in ballads and chronicles, or as given by Corneille, that it is outlined here in full.

As the curtain rises, we behold the great hall of the Count of Gormas's palace in Burgos.

It is a fête-day, and through an open window one catches a glimpse of waving banners and tapestry-hung houses. From time to time joyful blasts of trumpets are heard; and as the sounds come in through the open window, the Count of Gormas turns towards his friends, and says they summon them into the presence of the king. The noblemen add, that Don Rodrigo is to be knighted to-day, in spite of his youth and untried valour, and opine that the honour would not have been awarded to him, had it not been for the great services which have been rendered to the state by his old father, Don Diego. Since rewards seem to be a feature of the day's festivities, one of the gentlemen remarks that some great distinction ought to fall to the lot of the Count of Gormas, who will doubtless be selected as preceptor of the prince. But, although the count modestly disclaims this honour, he cannot but confess that he would consider it a brilliant reward for his numerous deeds of valour.

Just then Chimène, his only child, comes in, full of enthusiasm about the festivities, and overjoyed to hear the crowd loudly cheering and calling one name. Her father archly suggests that the name is a fine one, and glances at her so meaningly, that she blushingly con-

fesses he has discovered her secret. The count then frankly tells her that Rodrigo is quite worthy of her love, for he comes of a valiant race. Chimène having expressed her delight at this approval, the noblemen pass out of the hall to join the king, again assuring the count that the trumpet-blasts herald new honours for him also.

Left alone, Chimène gives free scope to her rapture at being able to love openly, for hers is too noble a nature to indulge in a secret passion. Her soliloquy is interrupted by the entrance of pages of the royal household, who usher in the Infanta and then withdraw. Chimène receives her distinguished guest with an exclamation of surprise; and when the Infanta comments upon her radiant looks, she declares it is impossible to be sad on such a glorious day. The Infanta, however, assures her that she herself is far from happy, because, forgetting her exalted station, which prohibits any alliance with a mere subject, she has fallen deeply in love. Chimène, questioning her eagerly, discovers that she loves Rodrigo, and is so deeply affected by this revelation, that the Infanta hastens to tell her that she need not grieve, for no duty conflicts with her passion. Then, soothed by Chimène's sym-

pathy, she adds that she is determined not to yield again to her feelings, but remembering her rank, to crush all future hopes by furthering Chimène's immediate marriage with Rodrigo.

The next scene represents a gallery leading from the palace to one of the entrances of the cathedral. Through the colonnade one catches a glimpse of the city beyond, and on a pillar stands a statue of St. James Major, the patron saint of Spain. As the curtain rises, the bells are ringing, and the assembled people are joyfully giving thanks for the victory which has been won over their enemies. The king, surrounded by all his court, officially announces the defeat of the Moors, and adds that in order to show his appreciation of Don Diego's long years of service, he is about to knight the latter's son, Rodrigo. Don Diego prepares to bend the knee in gratitude before his sovereign, who, however, stops him and makes him take his place by his side. Then Rodrigo, summoned out of the church where he has kept his knightly vigil, slowly advances, and, bowing respectfully before the king, awaits his commands. Chimène, the Infanta, Don Diego, and the spectators are all deeply impressed by the young candidate's noble carriage. When they have

expressed their pride and admiration, the king, solemnly addressing Rodrigo, tells him of the honour awaiting him, and bids him kneel down and, in the presence of God, his sovereign, and the assembled people, take the binding oath of knighthood.

The young man obeys; and while a priest holds an open Bible before him, the king solemnly asks whether he is ready to swear by the Holy Cross to be a loyal knight, to uphold the right, and be faithful to God, his king, and his church. The young man, in response, fervently pledges himself to be loyal in word and deed. Then the king gives Rodrigo a sword, which has done good service in many battles, telling him to use it to win new laurels. The youth proudly answers, that with such an example as his father ever before him, he will strive to prove worthy of the gift. The king then blesses Rodrigo in the name of God and of St. James, and bestows upon him the accolade, while the assembled people and Chimène fervently pray that the new knight may ever follow heavenly behests. Rising now, sword in hand, Rodrigo passionately appeals to the flashing blade to do wonders in behalf of his country, swears to obey his patron saint, and, gazing first upward and then at Chimène, prays that he may

be true to the angelic vision ever beckoning him onward in the path of glory and virtue.

Chimène, in an aside, gladly welcomes this sign of his love, and the king dismisses the new-made knight, bidding him go into the church to receive the blessing of God. The crowd follow Rodrigo into the sacred building; and the king, left alone with his principal noblemen, tells Don Diego that as he has not yet half acquitted his debt of gratitude towards him, he has selected him to fill the office of preceptor to the crown prince. The Count of Gormas and his friends, unpleasantly surprised by this appointment, protest loudly; but the king haughtily answers that it is disloyal to question his actions, and turning upon his heel, goes back into his palace.

Don Diego now offers to shake hands with the count, who refuses, and coldly remarks that Don Diego has won an office which should have been allotted to him. The old nobleman tries to appease his friend's wrath by assuming a cordial tone, and begging him to confer a crowning honour upon him by granting the hand of his daughter Chimène to Rodrigo. But the count ironically refuses, saying the young man should now aspire to a higher alliance. Still restraining his wrath, Don Diego observes that he cannot understand the count's showing so

much resentment at the king's choice, which they are all bound to respect, as becomes loyal subjects. This remark, too, fails to pacify the count, who, growing more bitter in his reproaches, finally taunts Don Diego into a retort which he answers by a blow.

Appalled at the insult he has just received, the trembling old man draws his sword, and, in spite of his failing strength, challenges the Count of Gormas; but the latter quickly disarms, then scornfully leaves him, overcome with shame and weakness. The friends of the count tauntingly inform the new preceptor that this last chapter of his life may prove very instructive to his royal pupil, and go away, laughing at his discomfiture.

Don Diego, left thus alone at the foot of St. John's statue, bewails the fact that he has lived so long that his strength failed him when it became necessary to vindicate his honour. The sound of Rodrigo's voice, taking the oath in the church, now reminds him that although old and feeble himself, he has a young and willing champion, who will resent the insult he has received. This thought gives him new courage; so rising from the bench where he has been crouching, Don Diego hurries forward, and meets Rodrigo just as the latter comes out of the cathedral.

With breathless eagerness, the old man demands whether his son is a man of courage; and when the youth haughtily answers that any other questioner would have immediate proof of it, Don Diego passionately relates how he has been insulted, and calls upon the young man to defend the family honour. At these words, Rodrigo fiercely demands the name of his assailant, and is thunderstruck when he learns that it is the Count of Gormas, the father of Chimène. But Don Diego vehemently urges him to lose no time in doing his duty; and while Rodrigo despairingly says that it will be at the cost of his love, he notices Chimène come out of the church, and pass out of sight. The young man watches her with such emotion that his father trembles lest he fail to avenge him. But, remarking that a man who can stay disgraced is unworthy to live at all, Rodrigo accepts the sword his father gives him, and goes away, solemnly swearing to seek revenge.

The next scene represents a street of Burgos, faintly lighted by the moon, and by a small lamp which is burning in front of an image of the Virgin, near Count Gormas's door. Rodrigo comes slowly along the deserted street, lamenting the cruel fate which forces him to avenge his own sire, by killing the father of the girl he

loves. As death seems preferable to such an alternative, he for a moment contemplates suicide; but soon, remembering all he owes to his father, he determines to forget his own sorrows, and think only of his duty. Having thus worked himself up to the proper pitch, he hastens towards the palace, and reaches the door at the very moment when the count appears on the threshold. A fierce request for a few moments' conversation is met by a curt command to speak; and Rodrigo, reminding the count who he is and why he is so angry, challenges him to immediate fight. The count refuses at first to meet such an inexperienced adversary; but as Rodrigo will not listen to him, and insists upon an encounter, he finally draws his sword to punish the young man for his presumption. Although the count fancies he can disarm his new adversary even more promptly than Don Diego, he is amazed to find himself face to face with an antagonist in every way worthy of his steel. They pause for a moment, then renew their fight, and Rodrigo, making a furious lunge, finally runs his sword through the count's body. But, even as his adversary falls, his fury abates, and flinging himself upon the corpse, he utters wild exclamations of the utmost despair. The noise of the encounter has roused the neighbours, and in a few

minutes the scene is crowded by people, who rush out frantically, and, discovering the count's body, cry out in dismay. Don Diego, coming down the street with some of his friends, sees what has happened, and turns to them proudly, saying he no longer needs their proffered aid, for his beloved son has already avenged him. Then stepping up to the young man, he embraces and congratulates him. But these caresses are very unwelcome to Rodrigo, who, although he does not repent having done his duty, cannot but remember that it is at the sacrifice of all he holds most dear.

In the mean time, the count's servants have picked up their master's body and carried it into the house, whence Chimène now rushes forth with wild eyes and dishevelled hair, frantically seeking the murderer. She swears that she will strike him dead with her own hand, and sobs aloud as she recalls how tenderly her father had spoken to her that very morning, telling her she could best please him by loving Rodrigo. These words are overheard by the unhappy youth, who has not even thought of taking flight. The sound of the funeral dirge rouses Chimène from her painful retrospection ; and seeing that no one will denounce the criminal, she asks the bystanders one by one, whether they killed her

father. Going thus from one to another, she finally comes to Rodrigo. One glance into his face reveals to her that he is the culprit, and the curtain falls upon her horror at this discovery.

In the next scene the people are singing and dancing on the great square of Burgos, directly in front of the royal palace. The Infanta soon appears, and, passing from group to group, bestows alms and food upon the poor, telling them to be happy and give thanks to God for all his mercies. The monks and maidens who attend her repeat these pious injunctions, and the scene grows more and more animated until the king appears and is welcomed by loud and spontaneous acclamations. These cheers delight the Infanta, who is congratulating her father upon the loyalty of his subjects, when Chimène comes rushing forward, and flinging herself at the king's feet, wildly implores him to do justice upon her father's murderer. But when she tells him that Rodrigo is the criminal, he sadly says that it was not to be expected that the young man would allow the insult offered to his father to pass without demanding satisfaction for it. These words do not, however, lessen Chimène's anger, and seeing that the king remains deaf to her entreaties, she vehemently

demands justice, wildly denouncing Rodrigo for having brought such sorrows upon her, and for bereaving her of her beloved father. Then, overcome by tender recollections of the count, she again resorts to entreaty, and eloquently pleads with the king to take up her cause. Her passionate appeal is heard by Don Diego, who now advances, resting heavily upon his son's shoulder. As he slowly passes through the crowd, the people side hotly for and against him, praising or denouncing Rodrigo according to their sympathy with him or his victim. When Don Diego reaches the king's presence, their clamours are silenced; and amid the general lull, the old man explains how unfortunate he is to have survived his usefulness, and to have been obliged to call upon his son to take his place. He adds that if his strength had not failed him he would have taken the count's life, and insists that as he is the real culprit, the punishment should fall upon him, and not upon Rodrigo, whose vigorous young arm can yet do good service for his country and king.

The principal spectators hear this plea with various emotions. The king and Infanta wonder whether blood does not call for blood; Rodrigo bewails his lost happiness; Chimène thinks only of revenge; Don Diego longs to

protect his son from death, and the two popular factions clamour for mercy or justice. A resounding blast of trumpets creates a diversion; and in answer to the king's question, the people announce that a Moorish knight is drawing near. A few minutes later, an emissary from Boabdil appears before the king, challenging the Christians to meet the Moors, whose hosts are even now on the way to reconquer Andalusia. The king returns a haughty answer to this challenge; and as the envoy goes away, the people defiantly call after him, that although many of his countrymen are coming, none will live to return.

But when the Moor is out of hearing, the king sadly turns towards Rodrigo, and gently reproaches him for having deprived him of his best general, the Count of Gormas, whose help is so necessary at this alarming crisis. Too old to take the field himself, Don Diego now boldly suggests that Don Rodrigo shall head the forces; and as the people hail the proposal with rapture, and the young man himself pleads to be allowed to live long enough to strike a blow for his country, the king consents to let him assume command. Then the scene closes with a concerted finale, in which all the actors take part, and all except Chimène urge

that Rodrigo be allowed to go and fight ere his final sentence is given.

In the next scene, Chimène, alone in her apartment, mourns for her dead father and her lost lover. The latter, however, suddenly enters, and, in answer to her question, tells her he has come to bid her a last farewell. Past happiness and blasted hopes fill their hearts with sorrow ; and although they reproach each other, they cannot but confess that they have both done their duty regardless of their own feelings. But when Rodrigo adds that he is going forth to battle, with the firm intention of never returning, Chimène shudders. Forgetting her resentment, she now urges him to come home, bearing such laurels that no one can ever resent the past. Beside himself with joy at the thought that she still loves him, and that he may yet win her forgiveness, Rodrigo refuses to listen to her when she tries to modify her statement, and leaves her, swearing that no foe shall daunt him.

The next scene is played in Rodrigo's camp, near the sea, where the soldiers are singing and drinking, and idly watching the dances of their Moorish captives.

Issuing from his tent, Rodrigo indignantly reproves his men, saying this is poor prepara-

tion for meeting the host which is coming to attack them. At these tidings, part of the soldiers advise a retreat, while the others promise to stand by their young captain, who vainly tries to prevent the cowards from hurrying back into the city. Ashamed of their dastardly behaviour, he finally bids them begone, and, left alone with a handful of faithful men, he urges the latter to rest for a while, so as to be ready to meet the foe, and sell their lives as dearly as possible. Having spoken thus, Rodrigo retires to his tent, where he moodily bids farewell to life and happiness, for he deems it impossible that he and his men should conquer. While he is committing his soul to God, a light suddenly appears before him. It grows brighter and brighter until he beholds his patron, St. James, who predicts that the Spanish army will be victorious. Heavenly voices and a loud peal of thunder confirm this vision; so rushing forth as day breaks, Rodrigo calls his men to arms, telling them they are now sure to win. Then, after a rousing speech, he leads his men out to begin the fray with the Moorish troops, which invade the scene as the curtain falls.

The last act begins in Granada, in a hall in the palace of the king. Don Diego is mournfully listening to the deserters, who report that

his son has perished, a victim of his impetuous courage. The old man proudly answers that such a death is glorious, and, realising at last that these men have deserted their captain in the face of danger, he indignantly bids them depart. This report of Rodrigo's death is overheard by the Infanta and Chimène, who now come into the room ; and while the former tries to comfort Don Diego, the latter gives free course to her grief. She confesses, that in spite of all that had occurred, she still loves Rodrigo, and is glad to think he died knowing himself beloved.

A loud blast of trumpets startles the three mourners. A moment later the king comes in, to bid them listen to the distant music and cease weeping, for all the town is beside itself with joy. The king's radiant face, and the joyful music, convince Chimène that Rodrigo cannot be dead ; and she and Don Diego rush to the window just in time to see him come home in triumph.

The next scene is played in the courtyard of the palace, where all the people have assembled to receive the returning troops. All sing of a great victory, in which their young captain has covered himself with glory, and won from the enemy the glorious title of the Cid, or conqueror. Then the procession begins, and soldiers, priests,

and captives march past the king. Last of all comes Rodrigo with his brave companions. Advancing, he gives back his sword to the king, assuring him that his foes are conquered, and modestly ascribing the glory of the victory to God. The king answers that Rodrigo must keep the sword he has handled so bravely, as well as the title he has won. Then he graciously adds that the young man need but speak, and that any other wish he cherishes will be fulfilled.

Rodrigo sadly answers that the only boon he longs to obtain is not at the king's disposal ; and the latter, rightly interpreting these enigmatic words, bids Chimène to decide what shall become of the young man. She hesitates, but the people urge her to speak. Drawing herself up proudly, Chimène now says that Rodrigo has added new lustre to the king's crown, saved the church, assured the prosperity of the rich, and defended the poor. All, therefore, are equally indebted to the young hero, and still they come to her urging her to reward the murderer of her father ! She haughtily adds that the murderer's fate is therefore in her hands, and looks so stern that the people groan aloud, and ask whether she will dare to punish their saviour ?

While she shrinks at the necessity of pronouncing a decision, Rodrigo suddenly steps

forward, and drawing his dagger, proposes to save her further sorrow by killing himself. He assures her that life has no charms for him without her, and adds that he will be glad to convince her of his utter devotion by dying at her feet.

Wildly imploring her dead father to forgive her, and saying that his soul can cherish no feeling of resentment in the heavenly mansions, Chimène springs forward, and snatches the dagger from Rodrigo's hand, at the very moment when he is going to plunge it into his heart. Then, clinging to her lover, she proudly confesses before all that she loves him far too dearly to condemn him to death.

The king expresses his approval; Don Diego gives the young couple his blessing; and the curtain falls while the chorus loudly express their satisfaction, crying, —

> "Love hath the vict'ry. To the brave the fair.
> Long live the Cid! May she his love still share!"
> (LYSTER'S Translation.)